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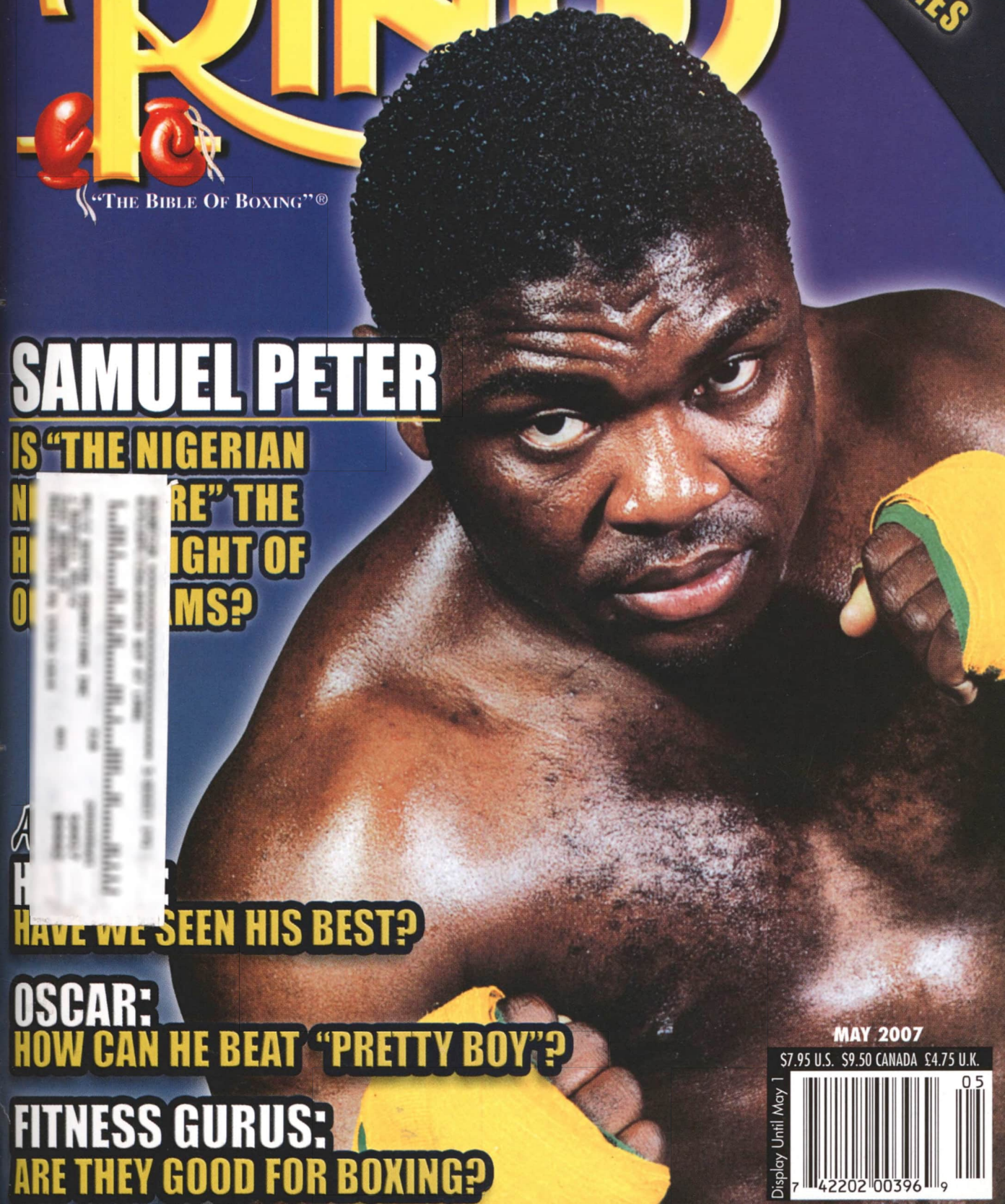

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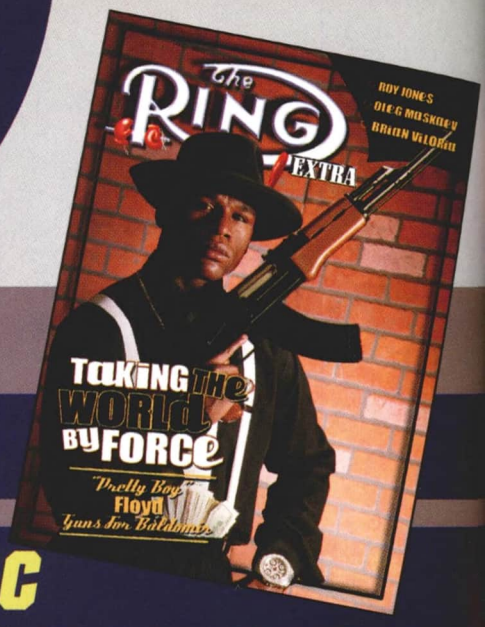

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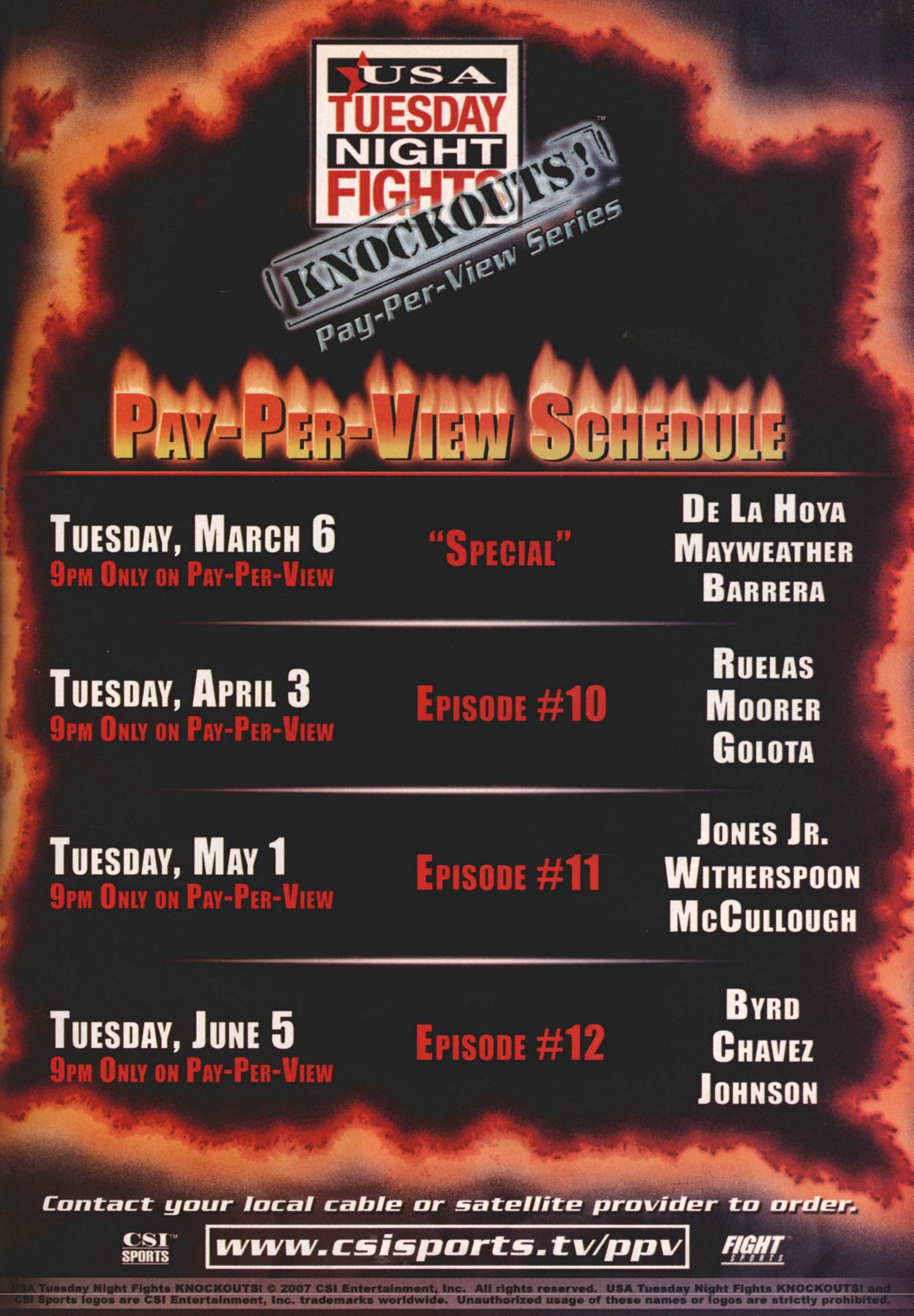

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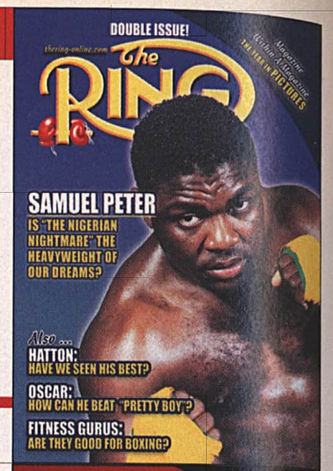

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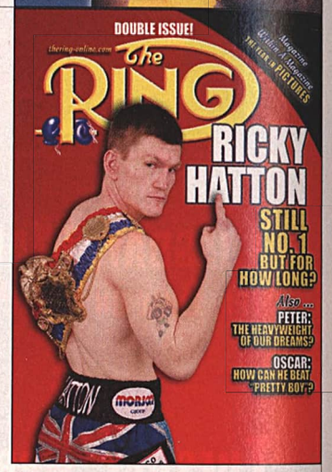

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[Opening Shot]

Magic Act

There's no slight-of-hand involved as Matthew "Magic" Hatton squashes Frank Houghtaling's nose en route to a seventh-round knockout on the undercard of big brother Ricky's world junior welterweight defense against Juan Urango at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas. Matthew, 30-3-1 (12), was able to capture the oh-so-prestigious IBF International welterweight title with the win, but he has a ways to go before he can get his countrymen to serenade him during his fights.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Volume 86, No. 5 May 2007

The RING

Sometimes it takes a while before you know if a new concept is going to work, but it didn't take long for THE RING Ratings Advisory Panel to prove its worth. Shortly after its formation, the editors were faced with a tough decision regarding the all-important heavyweight ratings following Samuel Peter's convincing decision over James Toney in their rematch.

Going into the fight, Peter was rated third and Toney fourth, with Wladimir Klitschko and Oleg Maskaev, ranked first and second, respectively. The big question was whether or not Peter's emphatic victory was enough to leapfrog him over Maskaev into the second spot. With the heavyweight title vacant, this was especially significant because the winner of a match between the number-one and number-two contenders would become the new heavyweight champion of the world.

There were strong arguments on both sides of the question. True, Peter looked vastly improved since his controversial first decision over Toney, but on the other hand, Maskaev had stopped Hasim Rahman, with whom Toney could only manage a draw. I sent an e-mail to each of our Panel members seeking their counsel, and received an overwhelming response. We ended up with a wide and diversified range of opinion to consider before making a final decision, which in this particular case was to rank Peter number two and Maskaev number three.

Moreover, due to the momentous ramifications of crowning a new heavyweight champion, THE RING has decided to only recognize a box-off between the number-one and number-two contenders, even though our criteria for filling championship vacancies permit a box-off between the number-one and number-three contenders in certain circumstances. This, however, is not one of them.

It also became clear during these early days of the Ratings Advisory Panel that there was some confusion about the thinking process involved in our decision-making in general. One area of perplexity occurs when a rated boxer moves from one division to another. Take, for example, Diego Corrales, who will not be found anywhere in this issue's ratings. Several readers and a few Panel members pointed this out, thinking that it was an oversight. Not so. Corrales, while certainly a world-class fighter, is moving from lightweight to junior welterweight after failing to make weight for his lightweight championship fight with Joel Casamayor, but he has yet to win a fight at 140 pounds. If and when he does, Corrales will reappear in the ratings in a position appropriate to his accomplishments. Other worthy fighters in a similar situation are Koki Kameda, Masamori Tokuyama, and Humberto Sosa, all of who have relinquished alphabet titles in order to campaign at a higher weight.

The reason for this policy is simple: THE RING wants to be fair to *all* fighters, including those already campaigning in the weight classes to which the aforementioned fighters are moving. In fact, the major thrust behind THE RING's ratings is fairness, and the only evenhanded method to achieve this is to base the ratings on results within the individual weight classifications. This is also why we avoid subjective opinion as much as possible. Merely thinking that Fighter A could beat Fighter B is not enough. That is something, like world championships, that must be decided in the ring.

***

While on the topic of THE RING Ratings Advisory Panel, I'd like to welcome aboard a new member, Paul Upham, an Australian boxing journalist who writes for *Fist* magazine and does commentary for the Fox Sports Network. In order to achieve our goal of the best possible ratings, it is essential to receive input from all corners of the globe, and I am delighted to have such a worthy contributor Down Under.

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FIST CASTING

Everlasting . . . Fist cast by Diego Corrales.

PARADE OF CHAMPIONS

Marvelous . . . Marvin Hagler waves to fans.

Hooray . . . George Foreman enjoys fans along parade route.

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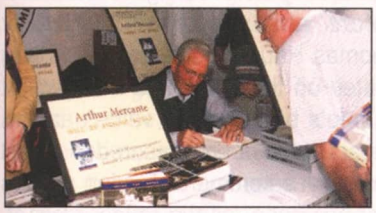


Hall of Fame referee Arthur Mercante signs his autobiography for the fans.

MUSEUM GROUNDS

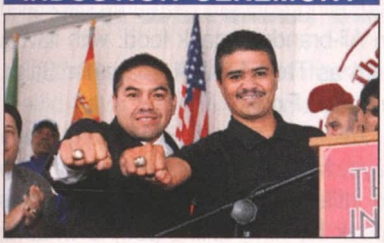
Autographs . . . "Sweet Pea" Pernell Whitaker spends time signing autographs on the Museum grounds.

5K RACE, FUN RUN

Finish Line . . . "Irish" Micky Ward in stride.

Go . . . Ken Norton officially starts race of celebrity boxers and runners.

INDUCTION CEREMONY



A Moment in Time . . . "Chiquita" Gonzalez and Michael Carbajal proudly show their Hall of Fame rings.

BOXING CARD SHOW

A Collector's Dream . . . Boxing memorabilia for fans. The world's only all-boxing show draws collectors from throughout the world.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

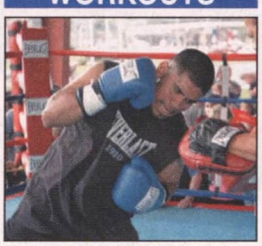
COCKTAIL PARTY

Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP cocktail party reception.

MUSEUM

Bob Arum and Angelo Dundee point to their plaques on the Hall of Fame Wall.

WORKOUTS



Juan Diaz works the bag mitts during daily public workouts.

RINGSIDE TALKS

Having Fun. . . Micky Ward, Lou Duva, and Bert Sugar telling stories.

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Cake, Candles, And Ali-Branded Snacks

When ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* paid tribute to Muhammad Ali on January 19 with discussion segments analyzing his life and career, the headline across the bottom of the screen read, "Remembering Muhammad Ali On His 65th Birthday." It was a curious word choice—*remembering*—when "celebrating" was perfectly available. It was as if they were paying tribute to a legend we had lost. Of course, we haven't lost Ali; he was alive to celebrate his 65th birthday. It's just that compared to how relentlessly alive he was as a young man, it's easy to think of him as though he's no longer with us.

Ali turned 65 on January 17, and he celebrated by watching Billy Crystal perform his one-man show at Arizona State University, near Ali's home in the warm climates of Phoenix. At the end of the show, Ali and his wife, Lonnie, joined Crystal and his wife, Janice, on stage. "He's been a truly great friend to me and a great friend to the world," Crystal said. "Please join me in singing 'Happy Birthday' to the greatest senior citizen of all-time." The crowd obliged, and also gave Ali a minute-long standing ovation.

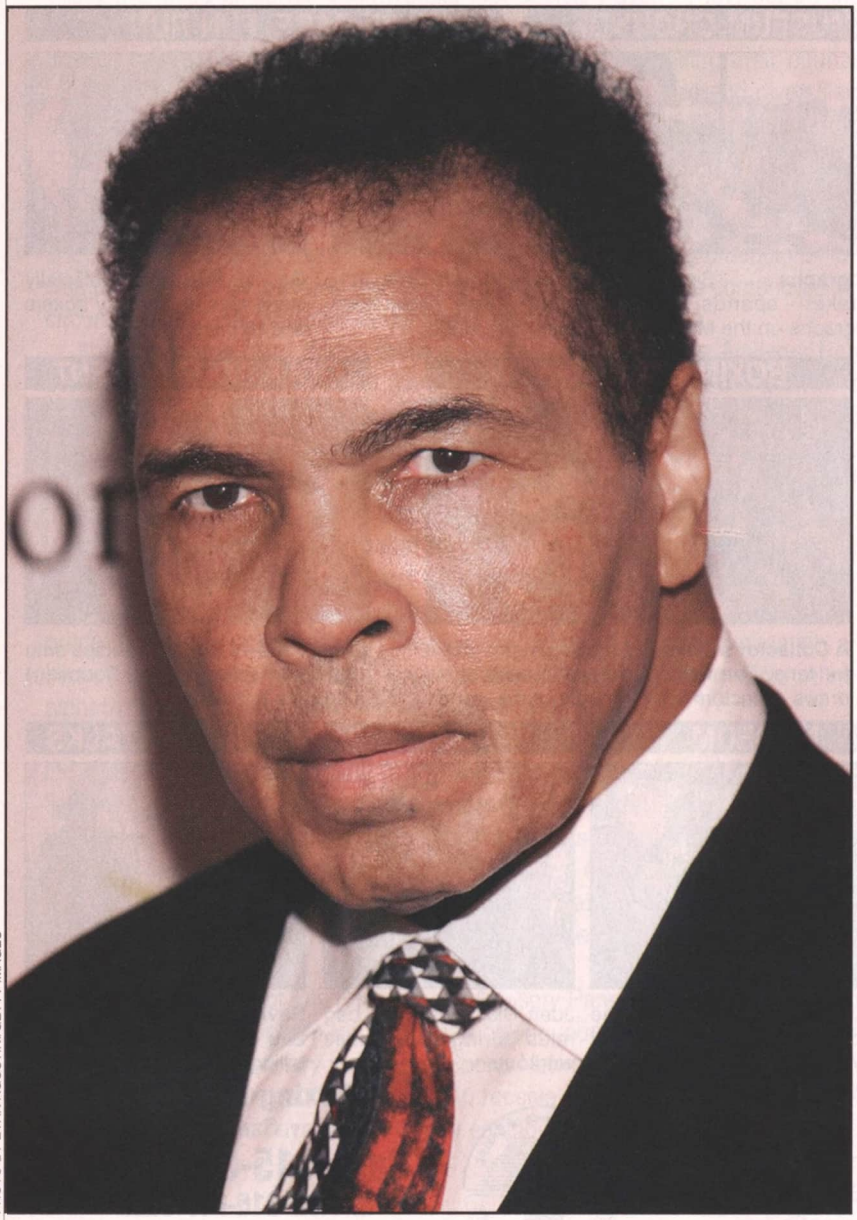


PHOTO BY EVAN AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES

Ali: Still making headlines at age 65

In his golden years, Ali is a more universally beloved figure than ever before, although, as Ali biographer Thomas Hauser pointed out in a blog written on the three-time heavyweight champ's birthday, his values and his impact have been obscured in recent years by a commercialization process that has seen "all the rough edges ... filed away from his life story." Coinciding with his birthday, CKX Inc., the firm that in '05 paid $50-million for the marketing rights to his name, launched an Ali-branded snack food, with flavors such as Thrill-A-Dill-A, Slammin' Salsa, and Fruit Fight.

Ali says virtually nothing these days, his Parkinson's allowing him to do little but quietly quiver. So others speak for him, telling people what Ali should mean to them. On the occasion of his latest milestone birthday, nearly all of what those people were saying about him came in the form of gushing praise. That's often how it is when a legendary figure grows old. His sins are mostly forgotten, his triumphs exaggerated. With Ali, there's no exaggeration necessary; his triumphs were extraordinary enough on their own.

But there's no need to eulogize him just yet. He's 65, not six feet under. Happy birthday, Muhammad Ali. We'll "remember" you when the time comes, but for now, we're singing along with the crowd and watching you blow out the candles.

—Eric Raskin

Tyson Facing Prison ... Again

Tyson's most recent mug shots

We all had a feeling this might happen to Mike Tyson; it's just that many boxing fans across the world never really wanted to believe that "Iron Mike" would wind up behind bars again.

But it could happen. The 40-year-old former world heavyweight champion was indicted on January 12 on felony drug possession, paraphernalia possession, and two misdemeanor counts of driving under the influence of drugs. If convicted of all four charges, Tyson could be facing 7½ years in prison, according to Maricopa County Attorney Andrew Thomas.

If found guilty, Tyson, 50-6 (44), would also be a three-time loser. He was previously convicted of rape in Indiana in 1992 and pleaded no contest to misdemeanor assault charges in Maryland in 1999.

"Tyson endangered the public and himself and must be held accountable for his actions," DA Thomas asserted. "It's my hope that a conviction and prison time will help him to break his addictions and learn to comply with the law."

The charges against Tyson stem from an arrest on December 29, 2006, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Police found bags of cocaine in Tyson's back pocket and another in a package of cigarettes in his car, according to court records.

According to Scottsdale police Sgt. Larry Hall, Tyson was stopped after his car almost struck a sheriff's vehicle while leaving a Scottsdale nightclub at about 1:45 a.m. Iron Mike cooperated, voluntarily submitting to a number of sobriety tests. But when police saw that Tyson showed more signs of impairment, they placed him under arrest.

Post-arrest interviews reportedly had Tyson admitting to the arresting Scottsdale officers that he had been "using" cocaine and that Tyson "stated he is an addict and has a problem."

Tyson, whose victory over Trevor Berbick in 1986 made him the youngest heavyweight in history to hold a piece of the title at age 20, has entered a not-guilty plea.

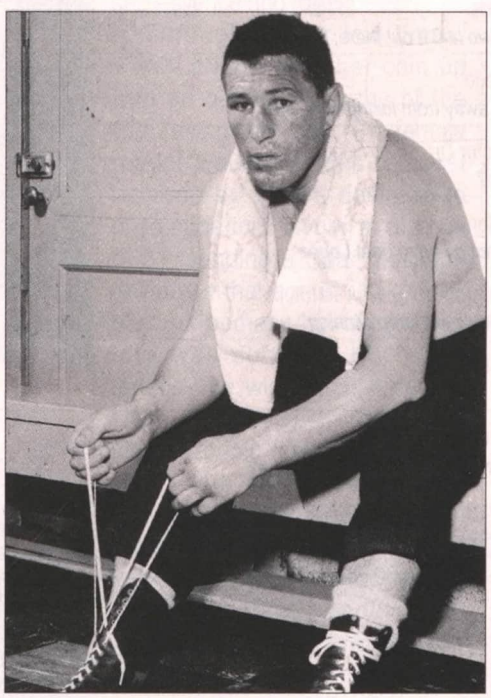
—Joe Santoliquito

Yvon Durelle, 1929-2007

Although he had 117 professional fights, Yvon Durelle would have been virtually forgotten outside of his hometown of Baie Ste. Anne, New Brunswick, if it hadn't been for just one bout, his classic 1958 brawl with Archie Moore.

Durelle knocked down then-light heavyweight champion Moore three times in the first round and once in the fourth, only to become the victim of a Lazarus-like comeback when Moore rallied to kayo the French-Canadian in the 11th round. Even though he lost, his participation in such a memorable fight made Durelle famous.

A fisherman by trade, Durelle turned pro in 1947 and had won the Canadian middleweight (KO 12 George Ross) and light heavyweight (W 12 Gordon Wallace) titles, as well as the British Empire 175-pound belt (KO 2 Wallace), before facing Moore in Montreal. He got a rematch the following year, but was totally outclassed and knocked out in the third round.



"The Fighting Fisherman" felled by stroke

A strong, durable slugger, Durelle also twice fought future heavyweight champion Floyd Patterson (L 8, KO by 5) and fellow Canadian George Chuvalo (KO by 12). Durelle had his final bout in '63 and left an overall record of 90-24-2 (51).

After quitting the ring, Durelle wrestled briefly, ran his own fishing business, and later opened a restaurant in Miramaichi, New Brunswick, where he shot and killed a patron in '77. The ex-fighter was charged with murder, but claimed self-defense and was acquitted. He was also the subject of a book, *The Fighting Fisherman*, by Raymond Frazer that was published in 1981.

Durelle suffered a stroke on Christmas Day and died on January 6. His family said he also suffered from Parkinson's disease.

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By William Dettloff

Date	Winner/Loser	Network	Division	Significance	Matchup	Result
1/5/07	Jose Santa Cruz W 10 Luis Arceo	Telefutura	l	C	C+	B
Santa Cruz not the most skilled guy around, but we haven't seen him in a bad fight yet						
1/5/07	Lamont Peterson W 8 Jauquin Gallardo	ESPN	jw	C+	B-	C+
If Gallardo had any kind of a punch, he would have been in this; still, a good, hard-fought scrap						
1/5/07	Anthony Peterson KO 4 Juan Garza	ESPN	l	C+	C+	C
Anthony, we're begging you: Please, stop with the sound effects						
1/5/07	Antonio Izquierdo W 8 Nick Casal	Showtime	l	C	B+	B-
Izquierdo gets off the canvas to give Casal a boxing lesson; good for him						
1/5/07	Jean Paul Mendy D 12 Anthony Henshaw	Showtime	sm	C+	B+	B-
Hey, Anthony—your name is Henshaw, not Hamsho; what were you doing inside all night?						
1/6/07	Travis Simms KO 9 Jose Antonio Rivera	Showtime	jm	B+	B	C+
Remember the old days, when if a guy sat out for two years he was never any good again?						
1/6/07	Samuel Peter W 12 James Toney	Showtime	h	A-	B-	C+
Peter outboxes Toney; has the whole world gone topsy-turvy?						
1/11/07	Carlos Vinan W 6 Eric Hunter	Versus	f	D+	A	B-
This is exactly the way Carlos Baldomir wished his fight against Floyd Mayweather turned out						
1/11/07	Anthony Thompson KO 6 Robert Frazier	Versus	m	C	B-	C
Good win for Thompson, who is going to be too quick for a lot of guys						
1/11/07	Kid Diamond W 10 Emanuel Augustus	Versus	jw	C+	C+	D+
If you saw Augustus throw a decent combination all night, you were looking too hard						
1/12/07	Walter Wright KO 8 Dan Wallace	ESPN2	jm	C	C-	C
Never mind the fighters, isn't it time we started drug-testing the referees?						
1/12/07	Cornelius Bundrage W 10 Chris Smith	ESPN2	jm	C+	B-	C+
If you were waiting for proof that Smith is shot, it doesn't get much clearer than this						
1/19/07	John Mackey KO 2 Tim Leonard	ESPN2	jm	D-	B+	C-
If Leonard is what passes for a local boxing hero in Key West, they need to resurrect Ernest Hemingway						
1/19/07	George Blades KO 7 John Williams	ESPN2	lh	C	B-	B+
For two guys not really going anywhere, these two laid it out there; good fight						
1/19/07	Randall Bailey KO 2 Harrison Cuello	ESPN2	jw	C+	D-	D+
Think about it, Randall: You're just a win or two away from losing a big fight						
1/19/07	Marvin Cordova Tech. Draw 1 Victor Ortiz	Showtime	w	B-	B+	F
Hey did anybody get the number of that ice pick?						
1/19/07	Juan Manuel Lopez KO 6 Cuauhtemoc Vargas	Showtime	jf	B	A-	C+
Cuauhtemoc not a bad fighter, but "not bad" is not going to beat Lopez						
1/19/07	Henry Bruseles W 12 Wilfredo Negron	Telefutura	jw	C+	C	C
As long as they keep fighting one another, Bruseles will keep winning						
1/20/07	Jose Luis Castillo W 12 Herman Ngoudjo	HBO	jw	A	C-	B-
Why does Castillo still look so damn skinny?						
1/20/07	**Ricky Hatton W 12 Juan Urango**	**HBO**	**World jw**	**A**	**C+**	**C+**
Did Urango actually think at the end that all those cheers were for him?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net;Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino; Versus

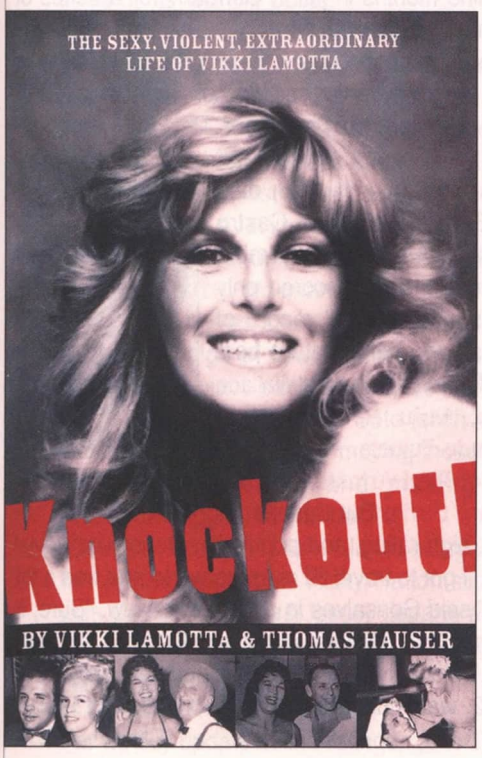
Boxing Bookshelf

Vikki LaMotta was neither a boxer, trainer, manager, nor a promoter. But as the former wife of former world middleweight champion Jake LaMotta, she will be forever linked to the Sweet Science. In her own way she was a fighter, and her life is now favorably chronicled in her new autobiography *Knockout!: The Sexy, Violent, Extraordinary Life Of Vikki LaMotta* (Sport Classic Books, $22.95, 208 pages).

Told to boxing writer Thomas Hauser, LaMotta, who died in 2005 at age 75, reveals the story of her life up to 1987, when she and Hauser collaborated on the project. Vikki requested Hauser not publish the book until her death, hence the 19-year wait for public distribution. LaMotta's wish was prompted by the desire to not be exposed to any repercussions or excess publicity, as in her later years she chose to lead a quiet life.

For the reader it is worth the wait. LaMotta discusses her triumphs and tribulations, often in a painful manner. From growing up in a household where her parents had trouble expressing love, to being raped at 14 by a local wise guy, to her turbulent marriage to Jake, followed by another failed marriage and having to scrape out a living as a model and chorus girl to support her children, LaMotta let it all hang out in what must have been a cathartic exercise for her. Hauser does a good job of portraying her as a down-to-earth, sweet person who sometimes made bad choices but always got off the canvas.

Having shown Vikki to be a decent person makes the reader even more sympathetic to her when learning about what she had to go through, and makes us wonder why she stayed with the "Raging Bull" for as long as she did. It was a classic example of how difficult it can be for many abused women to leave their violent spouses, and how anyone can still have a drop of love for the brute years later. Indeed, Vikki's revelations on Jake, especially in his most recent years, soberly show that the man has learned little, living almost in a state of denial about how his own life spiraled downward. But as Charles Grodin's character said in the movie *Midnight Run* (ironically, to Robert DeNiro, Jake's film alter ego), he "has only two ways to express himself—silence and rage."



Through all her low times, Vikki LaMotta kept her chin up with an optimism worthy of the Old Testament's Job. The female reader would perhaps be most inspired by Vikki's decision to pose nude for *Playboy* at the age of 51, sending a clear message to women that age is just a number. But perhaps her biggest victory was survival. Her story makes one wish such a person were still alive; it does seem unjustly ironic that former hubby Jake, with all the damage he caused others and himself, ended up outliving her. But Vikki LaMotta's life was a fascinating one with a happy ending, and those reading about it will be glad they did.

—Mike Greenhill

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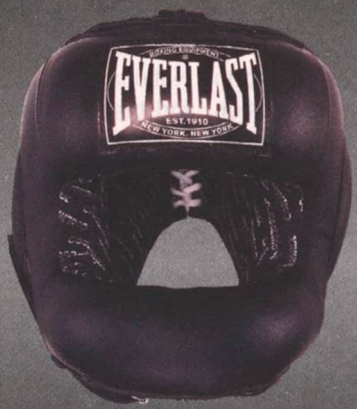

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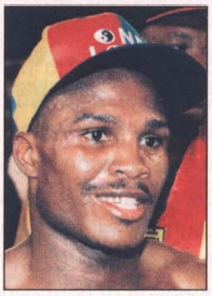
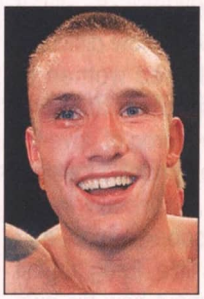
Outside the Ropes

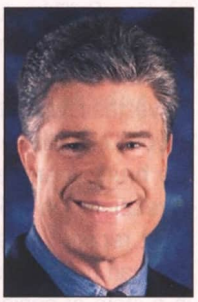
Former WBA welterweight titleholder **Ike Quartey** expects the hospital he is having built in the New Gbawe section of Acura, Ghana, to be finished in August 2007. The three-story hospital will be known as Ike Quartey's Specialist Hospital and is the boxer's way of giving back to his community ... The **New Jersey State Athletic Control Board** announced in January that, effective immediately, instant replay can be utilized during bouts to review a referee's call or lack of a call at the discretion of the lead promoter. The use of video replays would allow a commissioner to review issues such as: 1) a knockdown versus a slip; 2) accidental versus intentional fouls; 3) if a cut was the result of a legal blow; 4) if a fighter beat the count; 5) whether or not a blow landed low; 6) whether or not a punch landed before the bell rang. The commissioners, if approached by a contestant's chief second during a round, would review the issue at the end of the round. The Commissioner would have a maximum of three minutes to render a decision or choose to reserve judgment because further review is needed. As the state agency does not have the technology readily available, it will be up to the promoter to provide the necessary equipment ... WBC/WBA super middleweight titleholder **Mikkel Kessler** became the first boxer to win Denmark's two most prestigious sports awards. First, the undefeated Dane took top honors at the Danish sports awards show, awarded by the newspaper *Jyllands Posten* and the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation, and then captured the B.T. Gold award, which has been awarded to the best Danish athletes since 1930 ... Former WBC super featherweight titlist **Rolando Navarrete** was rushed to hospital in General Santos City, Philippines, after he was beaten by a man identified as **Jerry Mardan**. According to reports by the ABS-CBN Regional News, a scuffle began when Navarrete asked Mardan, who had been boarding at Navarrete's home, to pay the rent. Mardan allegedly hit the former boxer on the arms and legs with a hard object and then fled. Another tenant took Navarrete to hospital ... Texas referee **Laurence Cole**, 43, was suspended for six months and fined $500 for violating a rule during a fight he worked on November 25 in Hidalgo. Cole was punished for informing **Juan Manuel Marquez** that he was ahead on the scorecards in the eighth round of his bout with **Jimrex Jaca** ... In early-January, former **Mike Tyson** trainer **Kevin Rooney**, 50, was arrested in Coxsackie, New York, and charged with DUI. The troubled trainer has also been re-indicted by a grand jury for felony DWI and aggravated unlicensed driving, stemming from an incident last April. If convicted, Rooney could be sentenced to state prison for a period of 1½ to 4 years. According to the an article on TimeUnion.com, Rooney has blown the millions he earned in boxing on gambling and bad investments, and a federal tax lien has been placed on his home in Catskill, New York ... HBO blow-by-blow announcer **Jim Lampley**, 57, was arrested by San Diego County sheriff's deputies on suspicion of domestic violence, violating a restraining order, and dissuading a witness. **Candice Sander**, who was Miss California in 2003, claimed Lampley threw her against a wall, injuring her head, neck, and back. Lampley, who was released on $35,000 bail, issued a statement in which he claimed he was innocent of the charges ... Former WBC light heavyweight titleholder **Graciano Rocchigiani**, 42, was sentenced to nine months in jail in Germany for a series of parole violations ... Middleweight **Kemal Kolenovic**, 28, was killed outside of a bar in the Bronx, New York, when he was struck by a car that drove onto the sidewalk. Kolenovic, 10-6-2 (5), had his final fight on December 15, 2006, stopping **Ronnie Glover** ... Former lightweight contender **Johnny Gonsalvez**, 76, died on January 16, at his home in Castro Valley, California. A quick and nimble counterpuncher, Gonsalvez scored only nine knockouts in an overall record of 57-21-3, but was so skillful that he beat numerous top fighters, including **Wallace "Bud" Smith**, **Lulu Perez**, **Paddy DeMarco**, **Orlando Zulueta**, **Virgil Akins**, **Cisco Andrade**, **Paul Armstead**, **Rudy Cruz**, and **Henry Davis**. But despite his many victories, high rating, and popularity, Gonsalvez never got a title shot. "I got to travel all over the world and had a lot of good times," said Gonsalves in a 1981 interview. "Sure, it disappointed me never to get a chance at the title, but I got no complaints." Gonsalves, who fought professionally from 1948 until 1962, was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in '95.



Quartey: Building hospital in Ghana



Kessler: Wins top honors in Denmark



Lampley: Accused of domestic violence

Gonsalves: Dead at age 76

Quotable

"I know I'm not that young, but I'm still too young to die."

*—Sylvester Stallone on why he declined Mike Tyson's offer to play the role of Mason Dixon in **Rocky Balboa**, and gave the part to Antonio Tarver instead*

"Perception is reality. No one is going to tell me that the public puts Injin Chi in the same category as Marco Antonio Barrera. Even if Manny destroys either opponent in round one, with Barrera he is a hero. With Chi it is expected."

—Shelly Finkel's take on a possible Manny Pacquiao-Injin Chi match

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended January 22, 2007

Heavyweights: Samuel Peter moves from three to two, based on his lopsided victory in the rematch with James Toney (fourth last issue). Toney, in turn, switches places with Nicolay Valuev, who jumps from eight to four, while Toney drops to eight.
Cruiserweights: No changes.
Light heavyweights: No changes.
Super middleweights: No changes.
Middleweights: No changes.
Junior middleweights: Travis Simms enters the ratings at eight, thanks to his knockout victory over Jose Antonio Rivera. Fernando Vargas (seventh last issue) comes out of the ratings, enabling Vernon Forrest (eighth last issue) to move to seven.
Welterweights: No changes.
Junior welterweights: Herman Ngoudjo enters at 10, after putting up such a strong display against number-one rated Jose Luis Castillo, who won a split-decision after returning to the ring after an 11-month layoff.
Lightweights: No changes.
Junior lightweights: Streaking Edwin Valero (seventh last issue) switches with Rocky Juarez (sixth last issue), who has lost three of his last five bouts.
Featherweights: No changes.
Junior featherweights: No changes.
Bantamweights: No changes.
Junior bantamweights: Cristian Mijares (sixth last issue) switches with Alexander Munoz (fifth last issue), Masamori Tokuyama (first last issue) exits to campaign at bantamweight, which moves everyone up from two through 10. Tokuyama's departure makes room for Pramuansak Posuwan at 10.
Flyweights: No changes.
Junior flyweights: Koki Kameda (first last issue) exits, opting to campaign at flyweight, which advances everyone from two to 10 up one place each and makes room for Edgar Sosa at 10.
Strawweights: Omar Soto (sixth last issue) exits following a loss to Gilberto Keb Bass, moving those rated below him last issue up one spot each, and making room for Pornsawan Kratingdaemggym at number 10.
Pound-for-pound: Joe Calzaghe (10th last issue) jumps two places to eight, as Ricky Hatton slips from eight to nine. Jose Luis Castillo (ninth last issue) departs after his lackluster showing against Herman Ngoudjo. Miguel Cotto makes his debut at 10, replacing Castillo.

For weekly updated RING ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

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Pound-For-Pound

1. **Floyd Mayweather**
   Welterweight
2. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Junior Lightweight
3. **Winky Wright**
   Middleweight
4. **Jermain Taylor**
   Middleweight
5. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
6. **Marco Antonio Barrera**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **Rafael Marquez**
   Bantamweight
8. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Super Middleweight
9. **Ricky Hatton**
   Junior Welterweight
10. **Miguel Cotto**
    Welterweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to
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The Ring Ratings

For Period Ended January 22, 2007

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by The Ring are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between The Ring's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

The Ring Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of The Ring Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at thering-online.com

PHOTO BY FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Nicolay Valuev vaults to number four at heavyweight

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 47-3 (42)
2. **SAMUEL PETER** Las Vegas, NV 28-1 (22)
3. **OLEG MASKAEV** Staten Island, NY 34-5 (26)
4. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 46-0 (34)
5. **SHANNON BRIGGS** Brooklyn, NY 48-4-1 (42)
6. **SERGEI LIAKHOVICH** Belarus, 23-2 (14)
7. **LAMON BREWSTER** Los Angeles, CA 33-3 (29)
8. **JAMES TONEY** Ann Arbor, MI 69-6-3 (43)
9. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 22-0-1 (17)
10. **JOHN RUIZ** Methuen, MA 41-7-1 (28)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 43-4 (37)
2. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 35-3 (11)
3. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 35-2-1 (22)
4. **KASSIM OUMA** W. Palm Beach, FL 25-3-1 (15)
5. **SERGEI DZINDZIRUK** Germany 32-0 (21)
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 38-4 (30)
7. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 38-2 (28)
8. **TRAVIS SIMMS** Norwalk, CT 25-0 (19)
9. **IKE QUARTEY** Ghana 37-4-1 (31)
10. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Aurora, CO 40-10-1 (21)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 38-0-1 (20)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 46-3-1 (35)
3. **INJIN CHI** South Korea 31-3-1 (18)
4. **RODOLFO LOPEZ** Mexico 19-3-1 (13)
5. **TAKASHI KOSHIMOTO** Japan 39-1-2 (17)
6. **SPEND ABAZI** Denmark 32-1 (10)
7. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 25-0-1 (18)
8. **NICKY COOK** England 27-0 (15)
9. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 31-0-2 (22)
10. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 22-3-1 (12)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 41-3 (31)

1. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 25-2 (18)
2. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 29-1-1 (19)
3. **SOMSAK SITHCHATCHAWAL** Thailand 46-2-1 (37)
4. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 30-1 (28)
5. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 25-0 (15)
6. **GABULA VABAZA** South Africa 23-0-1 (5)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 23-0 (9)
8. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 33-5 (28)
9. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 26-3 (17)
10. **BERNARD DUNNE** Ireland 22-0 (13)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 36-3 (32)
2. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 21-2 (7)
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand 52-3-2 (37)
4. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 19-0-1 (6)
5. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 19-2 (15)
6. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN** Thailand 67-9 (44)
7. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico 35-5 (20)
8. **IRENE PACHECO** Colombia 33-1 (24)
9. **SIMONE MALUDROTTU** Italy 23-1 (9)
10. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 26-1 (17)

Cruiserweights

Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: O'NEIL BELL
Atlanta, GA 26-1-1 (24)

1. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 37-1 (27)
2. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 19-1 (10)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
France 32-3 (22)
4. **DAVID HAYE**
England 18-1 (17)
5. **VADIM TOKAREV**
Russia 22-0-1 (15)
6. **ENZO MACCARINELLI**
Wales 25-1 (19)
7. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
Germany 26-3-1 (18)
8. **MARCO HUCK**
Germany 18-0 (13)
9. **JOHNATHON BANKS**
Detroit, MI 13-0 (10)
10. **VIRGIL HILL**
Willison, ND 50-5 (23)

Light Heavyweights

Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 47-4-1 (32)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
Orlando, FL 24-4 (18)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
Hungary 25-0 (15)
3. **CLINTON WOODS**
England 40-3-1 (24)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Miami, FL 44-11-2 (29)
5. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 31-0 (21)
6. **PAUL BRIGGS**
Australia 25-3 (18)
7. **ROY JONES**
Pensacola, FL 50-4 (38)
8. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
Huntington Beach, CA 41-3 (25)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
Argentina 27-2 (14)
10. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 23-0 (15)

Super Middleweights

Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 42-0 (31)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 38-0 (29)
2. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
Australia 27-3 (21)
3. **JEFF LACY**
St. Petersburg, FL 22-1 (17)
4. **MARKUS BEYER**
Germany 34-3-1 (13)
5. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 24-0 (18)
6. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Canada 17-0 (16)
7. **CARL FROCH**
England 20-0 (16)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
Tulsa, OK 23-0 (16)
9. **DENIS INKIN**
Germany 29-0 (22)
10. **PETER MANFREDO JR.**
Pawtucket, RI 26-3 (12)

Middleweights

Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: JERMAIN TAYLOR
Little Rock, AR 26-0-1 (17)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 51-3-1 (25)
2. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Germany 22-0 (17)
3. **EDISON MIRANDA**
Colombia 27-1 (24)
4. **MARIANO CARRERA**
Argentina 30-4 (21)
5. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 61-7 (41)
6. **SAM SOLIMAN**
Australia 33-8 (13)
7. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 26-2 (12)
8. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
Finland 18-0 (14)
9. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 24-2 (11)
10. **KELLY PAVLIK**
Youngstown, OH 29-0 (26)

Welterweights

Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 37-0 (24)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
Mexico 34-4 (24)
2. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
Argentina 43-10-6 (13)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
Puerto Rico 28-0 (23)
4. **ZAB JUDAH**
Brooklyn, NY 34-4 (25)
5. **LUIS COLLAZO**
Queens, NY 27-2 (13)
6. **KERMIT CINTRON**
Reading, PA 27-1 (25)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
Germany 38-3 (12)
8. **ARTURO GATTI**
Jersey City, NJ 40-8 (31)
9. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 32-0 (24)
10. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
Ghana 29-2 (18)

Jr. Welterweights

Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 42-0 (30)

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
Mexico 55-7-1 (47)
2. **JUNIOR WITTER**
England 35-1-2 (20)
3. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
Brooklyn, NY 27-2-1 (18)
4. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
Australia 43-8-1 (28)
5. **SOULEYMANE M'BAYE**
France 35-1 (20)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
Washington, DC 31-5-1 (17)
7. **JUAN LAZCANO**
El Paso, TX 37-3-1 (27)
8. **DEMETRIUS HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 25-0-1 (10)
9. **KENDALL HOLT**
Paterson, NJ 21-1 (12)
10. **HERMAN NGOUDJO**
Canada 15-1 (9)

Lightweights

Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOEL CASAMAYOR
Miami, FL 34-3-1 (21)

1. **JUAN DIAZ**
Houston, TX 31-0 (15)
2. **JULIO DIAZ**
Coachella, CA 33-3 (24)
3. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Las Vegas, NV 27-2 (16)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
Mexico 42-3 (29)
5. **DAVID DIAZ**
Chicago, IL 32-1-1 (17)
6. **NATE CAMPBELL**
Jacksonville, FL 29-5-1 (24)
7. **ALMAZBEK RAIYMKULOV**
Las Vegas, NV 24-1-1 (14)
8. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ**
Mexico 24-2 (13)
9. **GRAHAM EARL**
England 25-1 (12)
10. **YURI ROMANOV**
Belarus 18-2 (12)

Jr. Lightweights

Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 43-3-2 (34)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 63-4 (42)
3. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 27-0 (17)
4. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 48-5 (34)
5. **JORGE BARRIOS**
Argentina 46-3-1 (33)
6. **EDWIN VALERO**
Venezuela 21-0 (21)
7. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 26-3 (18)
8. **VICENTE MOSQUERA**
Panama 24-2-1 (12)
9. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
Thailand 50-3-1 (39)
10. **ALEX ARTHUR**
Scotland 24-1 (18)

Jr. Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
Japan 10-0 (5)
2. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
Mexico 30-2 (16)
3. **LUIS PEREZ**
Nicaragua 24-1 (15)
4. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
Mexico 32-2-1 (24)
5. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
Mexico 30-3-2 (12)
6. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
Venezuela 28-2 (26)
7. **JORGE ARCE**
Mexico 45-3-1 (35)
8. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
Japan 30-6 (20)
9. **JOSE NAVARRO**
Los Angeles, CA 24-2 (10)
10. **PRAMUANSAK POSUWAN**
Thailand 33-1-1 (18)

Flyweights

Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
Thailand 63-2 (31)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
Venezuela 27-0 (17)
3. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
Australia 27-0 (21)
4. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
Argentina 23-0-2 (15)
5. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
France 21-1 (8)
6. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
Panama 24-1 (17)
7. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
Japan 28-4-1 (13)
8. **VICTOR BURGOS**
Mexico 39-14-3 (22)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
Mexico 35-1-1 (27)
10. **DAISUKE NAITO**
Japan 30-2-2 (19)

Jr. Flyweights

Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: HUGO CAZARES
Mexico 24-3-1 (18)

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
Mexico 22-1-2 (16)
2. **JUAN LANDAETA**
Venezuela 20-5-1 (16)
3. **NELSON DIEPPA**
Puerto Rico 24-3-2 (13)
4. **OMAR NINO**
Mexico 24-2-2 (10)
5. **BRIAN VILORIA**
Waipahu, HI 19-1-1 (12)
6. **WILL GRIGSBY**
St. Paul, MN 18-3-1 (7)
7. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
Mexico 34-5-1 (20)
8. **NOBUAKI MASUDA**
Japan 23-3-1 (3)
9. **OMAR SALADO**
Mexico 14-0-2 (7)
10. **EDGAR SOSA**
Mexico 26-5 (14)

Strawweights

Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
Puerto Rico 27-0 (6)
2. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
Japan 20-1-3 (8)
3. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
Indonesia 61-5-5 (31)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA**
Japan 17-1 (6)
5. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
Japan 18-2 (7)
6. **DANIEL REYES**
Colombia 37-4-1 (30)
7. **RODEL MAYOL**
Philippines 23-1 (18)
8. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
Mexico 24-8-3 (13)
9. **ERIBERTO GEJON**
Philippines 21-1-1 (13)
10. **PORNSAWAN KRATINGDAENGGYM**
Thailand 17-0 (13)

By Jeff Ryan

Raw Eggs And Raw Emotion

Did Sylvester Stallone decide to call his latest film *Rocky Balboa* instead of *Rocky VI* because the latter sounded too much like a *fifth* sequel? (Yikes, boxing hasn't seen this many return engagements since Sugar Ray Robinson vs. Jake LaMotta.) Or would a Roman numeral reference remind us that our favorite pugilistic protagonist is so old that he could have made his pro debut at the Colosseum? Considering Rocky's age, we expected the film's theme song to be, "Gonna Need Help Closing My Fly Now."

Okay, okay, that's enough of the cheap shots. Referee Joe Cortez has just penalized me a point. The truth is that *Rocky Balboa* proved to be pretty good entertainment for a winter afternoon, a lot better flick than this poor man's Roger Ebert expected it to be. The mere idea of a fifth sequel to an Academy Award winner for Best Picture is sacrilegious, of course, and the film isn't without its flaws. But let's get to that later.

Entering the Cineplex for the sixth go-round, my scorecard for the *Rocky* series read like this: *Rocky II* was ranked first, followed by the original, and then *Rocky V*. *Rocky III* and *Rocky IV*, two stupid and thoroughly unrealistic bombs, placed fourth and fifth, disrespectfully. (When Russian villain Ivan Drago uttered his famous line, "I must break you," in *Rocky IV*, it's too bad he wasn't talking to the camera lens.) A lot of people didn't share my fondness for *Rocky V*, and, admittedly, my perception was a bit skewed because the Poor Man's Ebert was operating under the assumption that *Rocky V* would be the last of the series and everything was being wrapped up nicely.

Despite my fears, though, *Rocky Balboa* works. It rates just behind the first two films because it avoids turning "The Italian Stallion" into the cartoon character of *III* and *IV* and presents him as an underdog

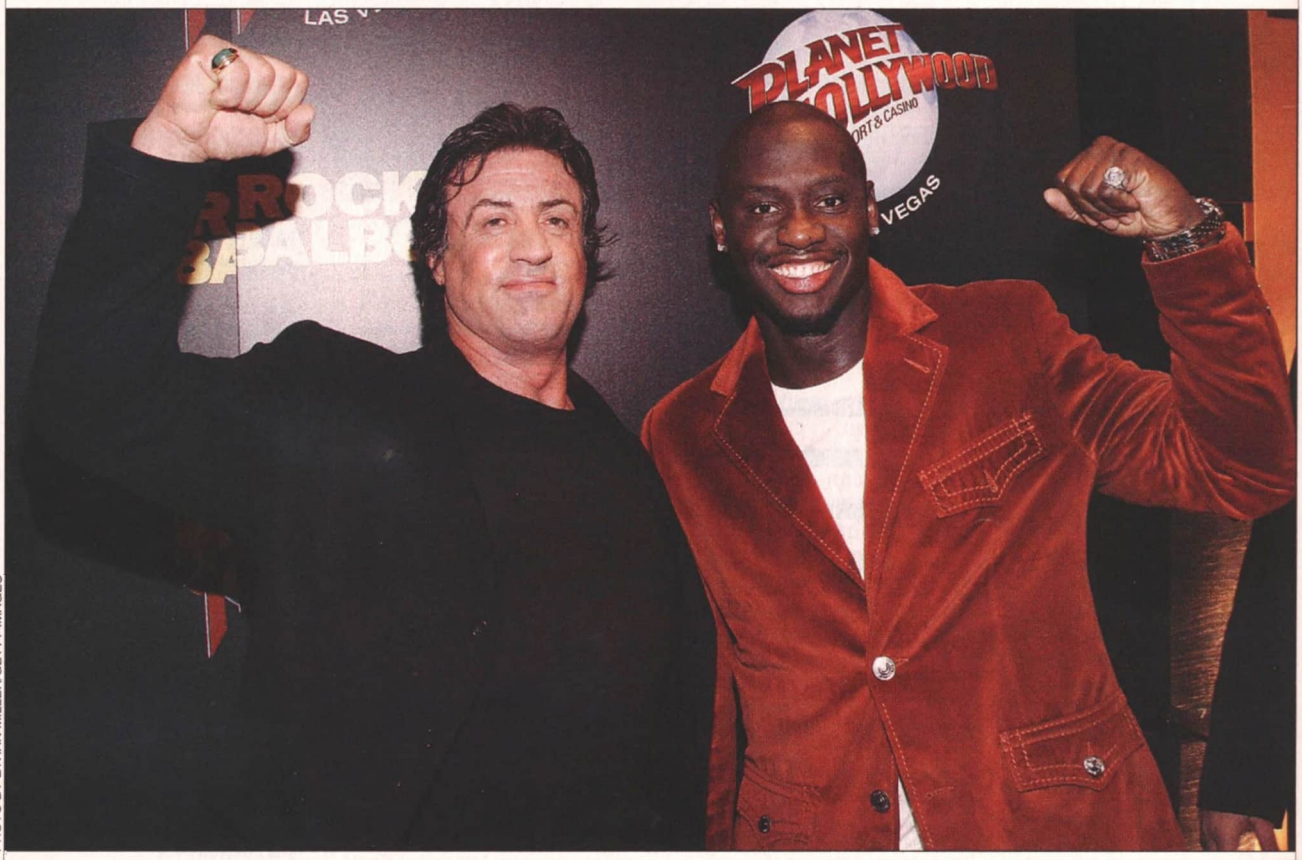


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

***Stallone and Tarver at Vegas premiere of* Rocky Balboa**

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Scenes from **Rocky Balboa** *were filmed at the Taylor-Hopkins II fight at Mandalay Bay*

again. What *was* disappointing was that Sylvester Stallone couldn't resist having his hero get involved in a bloody punchout one last time. In *V*, Rocky at least threw his hooks in the street. In *Rocky Balboa*, sadly, he answers a bell in Las Vegas.

Stallone gets plenty of credit this time around for hitting us with some shots we don't see coming: The death of the beloved Adrian, Rocky's unlikely and important friendship with a former street kid he once tried unsuccessfully to steer clear of trouble, and the reappearance of Spider Rico, who was butting open Rocky's eyebrow the first time we ever saw the Stallion on screen. And who could have expected the vain Stallone, who had Rocky chiseled and pumped like a bodybuilder by flick *IV*, to drop his guard and show him wrinkly and scarred?

There is, in fact, plenty of more realism in this movie than could have been expected. The fight scenes look believable. Lou DiBella plays himself as a promoter. The ads on the turnbuckles and ring canvas are for actual companies. The bout airs on HBO Pay-Per-View with the network's broadcast team calling the action. And Stallone is wise enough to realize that the fiftysomething Rocky wouldn't beat heavyweight champ Mason Dixon, even in an exhibition.

If this does indeed conclude the *Rocky* series, the old warrior goes out scrambling our emotions again. And yet, a screenwriter of Stallone's caliber could have created a more compelling script had he kept Rocky from ever making a fist. A depressed widower struggling with the urge to be someone again, all the while tormented by his inability to climb on any kind of a stage, would

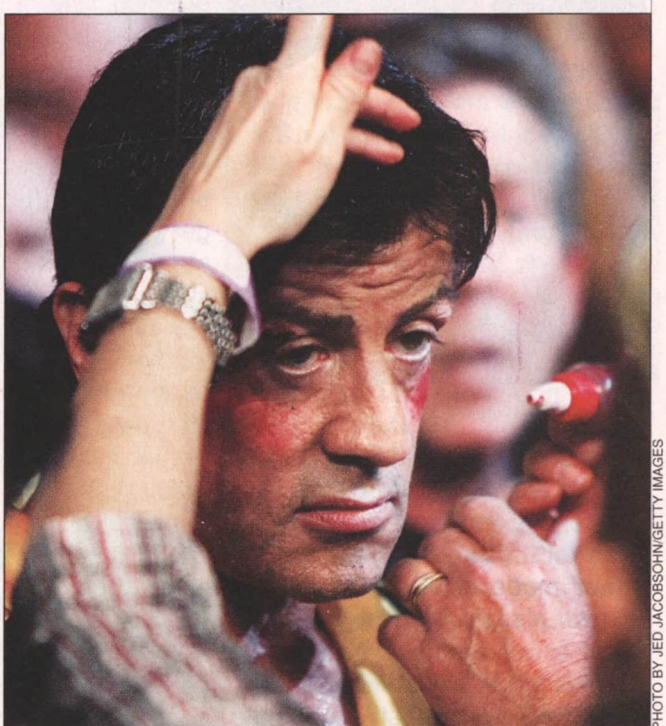


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Stallone has his makeup fixed between rounds

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from *a philistine* to a guy from the *Philippines:*

• If Mike Tyson's arrest for drug possession and DUI in Arizona leads to a conviction and prison time, that might be the best thing that could happen to the ex-champion. Tyson, who told police that he's a cocaine addict, seems headed for the kind of horrible ending that befell baseball manager Billy Martin. ("Billy The Kid," you may remember, self-destructed bit by bit until he finally died drunk in an auto accident in 1989.) Lots of people in boxing believe this, even if they're reluctant to state it publicly. And this is one rare time when we pundits hope our prediction is wrong.

• If Bernard Hopkins wants to do something truly special, as he claims, he'll target Wladimir Klitschko and not Oleg Maskaev if he takes on a heavyweight. Hopkins is clearly eyeing the easier route, as Roy Jones did when he faced John Ruiz instead of Lennox Lewis. Michael Spinks, who challenged undefeated all-time great Larry Holmes rather than an alphabet softie like Pinklon Thomas or Tony Tubbs, must be laughing when Hopkins says of a Maskaev showdown: "I need a major threat, where if I don't win I'm dead. I need that *is-he-crazy* kind of conversation going on."

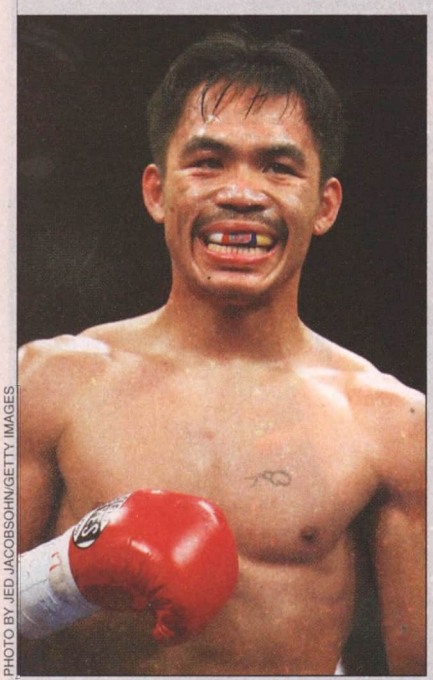


PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Let's clone Pacquiao!

• Stubborn, rusty, old Rocky Balboa reminded me of Evander Holyfield with his burning need to get that whatever-it-is out of his system while on the verge of collecting Social Security. If that was Holyfield dropping a close decision to Mason Dixon, though, "The Real Deal" would be claiming that, after just a few more tune-ups, he could surely reverse the outcome.

• Either Rocky has been blessed with no gray hair well into his 50s, or he has more pine tar in his mane than Albert Pujols has on his bat.

• As we went to press, the MSG Network still hadn't unveiled its final few selections for *The 50 Greatest Moments At Madison Square Garden*, but one gets the impression that the fix might be in. Is the series really an unbiased ranking of significant happenings in the famed building? Or were some moments chosen simply because they'd appeal to a certain audience, namely loyal MSG Network viewers? An ad for the series in this season's New York Rangers pocket schedule promised hockey fans "a Rangers moment in every episode." *Hmmm.*

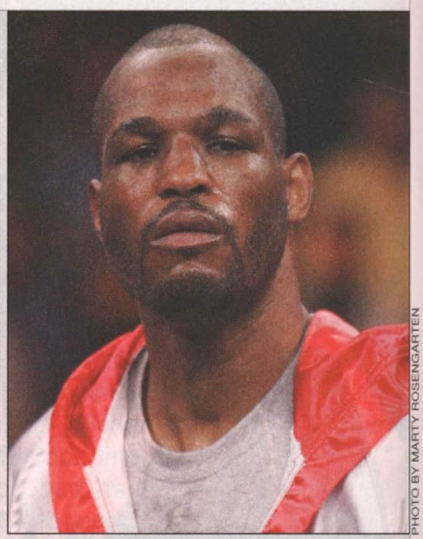


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Hopkins should target Klitschko

• Short of a kidnapping, what will it take to get Joe Calzaghe to fight in the U.S.?

• Glad to see James Toney really tortured himself into rock-hard shape for the rematch with Samuel Peter. Toney did more work with his mouth after the fight (claiming he won) than he did with his legs before it or his fists during it.

• The only reason you can't say that Toney has a chip on his shoulder is because he took it off, dipped it in a bowl of guacamole, and ate it. If Peter is "The Nigerian Nightmare," what is Toney? Death by chocolate?

• Give The Nightmare a rematch with Klitschko, not a shot at Maskaev. When Peter inevitably floors Klitschko again, perhaps he can do a better job of making sure he stays down this time.

• My opposition to the idea of human cloning wanes when thoughts of creating a second Manny Pacquiao come to mind. Ideally, the next version would average about 12 fights per year and the skin around his eyes would be tougher to cut than a week-old dinner roll.

have made for a better story. Though not one as crowd-pleasing. Which is why it had no chance.

HASHMARKS AND HAYMAKERS: The original *Rocky* was responsible for launching the career of at least one world titleholder, former two-division titlist Vinny Paz, who, as a teenager, exited the theater and decided right then that he'd one day make his living in the pain business. And now we learn that *Rocky Balboa* served as motivation, too, this time for an NFL team desperately making a run at the postseason.

New York Jets head coach Eric Mangini had his team view the movie on its flight to Florida for a crucial game against the Miami Dolphins on Christmas night, a contest the Jets would win en route to a playoff appearance (and subsequent first-round exit). It wasn't the first time Mangini, a huge fight fan, turned to the Sweet Science to fire up his squad. On a few occasions during the season, he invited a special guest to the Jets' practices: trainer, broadcaster, and motivational speaker Teddy Atlas.

"There are a lot of parallels between football and boxing, but I got the players' attention when I said to them that my sport is even tougher than theirs," Atlas told me. "There aren't 10 guys to share the danger with in boxing. It's you and you alone. There's no natural desire in people to win. That urge is created and inspired."

The first time he was summoned to the Jets' Long Island, New York, training complex was the day before New York's rematch with the New England Patriots, a team that had beaten the Jets seven times in a row. Atlas compared the Pats to Mike Tyson and the Jets to Buster Douglas, telling Mangini's troops to just play the game and not think about the reputation of the opponent. Atlas also relayed the story of a kid who was tired of having his lunch money stolen every day and came to Cus D'Amato's gym in Catskill, New York, where he worked with Atlas until he was eventually able to stand up to the bully. And the trainer talked about "going into the dark room," Atlas-speak for an athlete surrendering mentally.

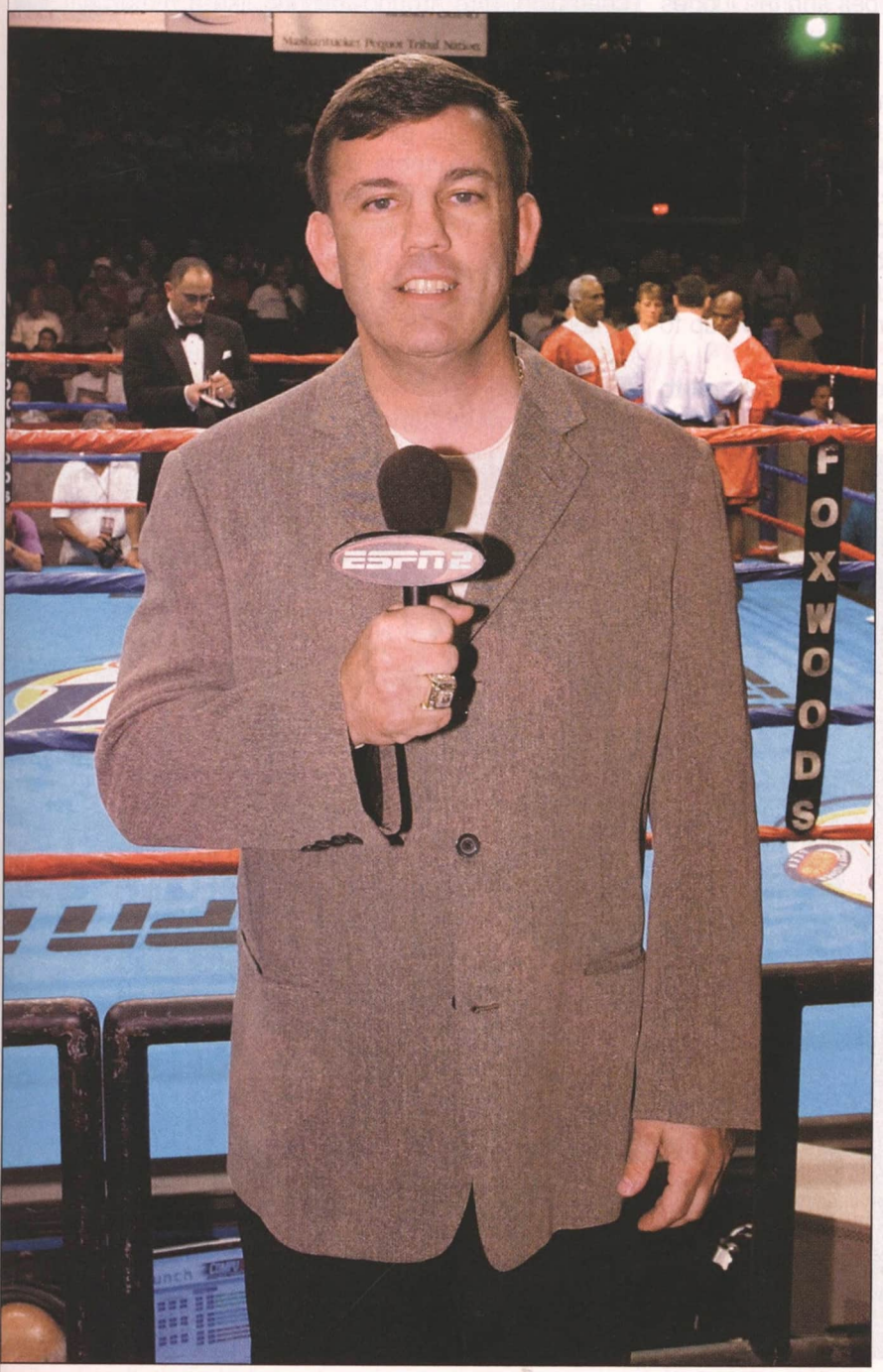


PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPN

Atlas grabbed the Jets' attention

Atlas chuckled as he recalled Mangini telling him that defensive end Shaun Ellis told a reporter after "Gang Green's" upset of the Pats, "We got tired of having our lunch money taken," and one Jets muscleman said to another while staring at him across the line one day in practice, "Don't be taking us in that dark room with you."

Said Atlas, "The coaches told me they never saw the guys listen to anyone like they did when I spoke to them. And one coach told me they saw guys taking notes who they weren't sure even knew how to use a pen."

Mangini is interested in hiring Atlas to work with the Jets during this off-season, not to toughen their psyches, but to improve their footwork, hand placement, and conditioning. The Jets may not yet be a team nobody wants to play, but if Atlas can fit some more time with them into his crazy schedule, they'll surely be a team nobody wants to fight. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Taylor Stuck In Reverse?

Jermain Taylor, who'd been struggling for a style, has found one at last. He runs away from his opponent until he hears a final bell and the judges award him the decision.

Against determined, undersized Kassim Ouma, the middleweight champ fought much of the time like a vehicle whose forward gears were stripped. You have to give him credit for hanging in there with that closed eye, but despite the lopsided (on two cards) unanimous decision in his favor, Taylor didn't give fans a lot to love. Coming on the heels of two close matches with the aged Bernard Hopkins and a draw with Winky Wright, this title defense once again failed to live up to Taylor's moniker of "Bad Intentions."

Muhammad Ali could lean back or step back to sucker in his man and then startle him with a perfect punch. I once saw him score a knockout while in reverse. Prince Naseem Hamed, another unorthodox champion, tore around the ring like a motorboat with no rudder. But then he'd throw a huge shot out of some impossible angle and that's all she wrote.

But the reversing Taylor, unlike Ali or Hamed, must put on the brakes, get set, and then throw. It's cumbersome, an exploitable weakness. And a fighter who runs out of canvas as frequently as Taylor should learn how to turn his opponent. The world deserves more from its middleweight champ than Taylor puts out.

When Hamed was handed his head by Marco Antonio Barrera, Emanuel Steward was in the corner fuming at Hamed to at least keep his chin down. As Taylor's second, Steward spent rest periods pleading with his guy to stop backing up. Steward is a trainer

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Junior middleweight Ouma has Taylor on the defensive

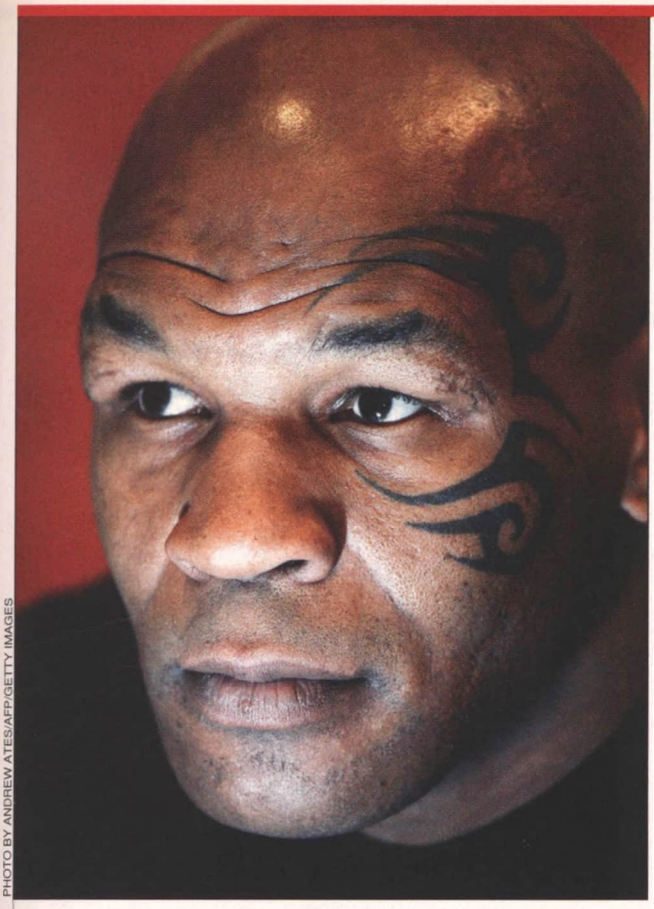


PHOTO BY ANDREW ATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tyson: Fails to practice what he preaches

you call in to make a sharp fighter sharper, and when he has to teach basics to experienced pros, you get the feeling he'd prefer herding sheep.

Taylor would likely come out on top against Jeff Lacy. But Joe Calzaghe, unless he grows old fast, would chew him up and spit him out.

And the WBC experiment with open scoring, billed as a magic tonic for rotten judging, served mostly to remove suspense. If the WBC wants to open up boxing, it might start instead by opening its books.

CASTING FIRST STONE: So Mike Tyson, who spoke convincingly on the evils of booze and drugs to an audience of juvenile offenders at the jail in Scottsdale, Arizona, was subsequently jailed there on charges relating to booze and cocaine. Remind you of Diego Corrales lambasting Jose Luis Castillo for failing to make weight and then? … Well, you know the rest.

LOOKING FOR LOSERS: See if this sounds familiar. *The New York Times* reports that third-rate college football teams are a hot commodity as big powers look to pad their home schedules. Competition for weaklings intensified when the schedule was expanded to 12 games.

Buffalo, for example, 1-10 in 2005, sifted through a pile of invitations before choosing to let its team get flattened by Auburn and Wisconsin last year for $600,000 per humiliation. It finished 2-10, losing all the big ones and most of the small ones.

Should Buffalo ever need scheduling assistance, it might consider hiring specialists: matchmakers from the fight world who feast on fighters like David Vedder. Heavyweight Vedder makes Buffalo look like USC. Last I checked, he was 23-25-5 (3). Presumably, those three kayoed opponents all had stomach flu.

Since 2001, this 42-year-old San Jose mediocrity padded the records of Calvin Brock, Oleg Maskaev, and Chris Byrd as they marched toward their own version of post-season play.

Back when he was a light heavy, Vedder was a human sacrifice for Virgil Hill, Jeff Harding (twice), Henry Maske, Montell Griffin, and Darius Michalczewski. His middling capabilities were so pronounced, they earned him not one, not two, not three, but *four* title shots, starting with Hill in 1990, when Vedder was already well on the road to Loserville. Vedder, who has a chin, usually made it to the final bell. So far, so has Buffalo.

PUNCH-EATING ARREOLA: Dan Goossen has been touting his young heavyweight Chris Arreola with gusto, yet choosing words carefully so as not to upset another heavyweight in his promotional stable, James "Quick To Take Offense" Toney. But Toney,

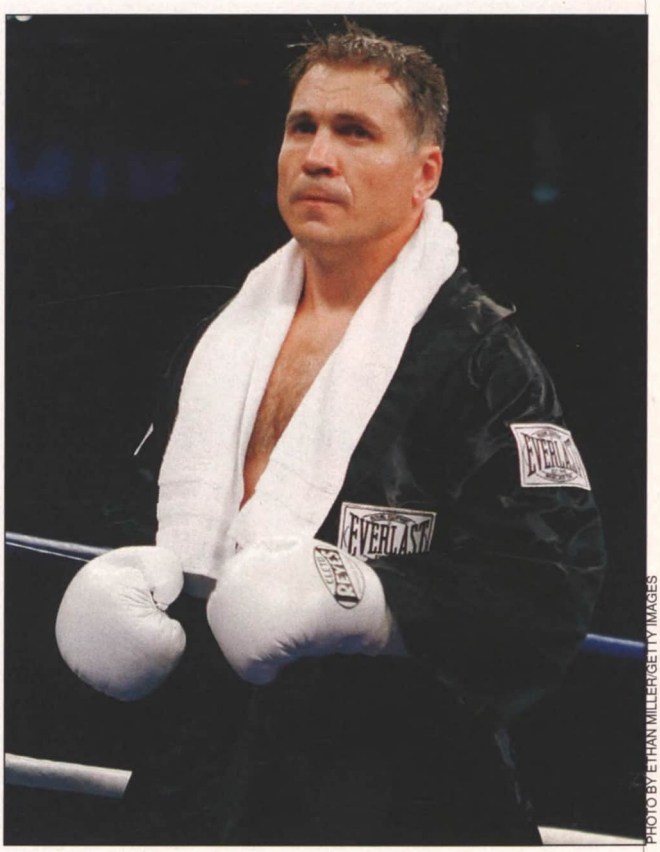


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Maskaev: One of 25 to beat Vedder

even though he's been slipping badly, still has nothing to worry about from Arreola, 18-0 (16), who doesn't move his head or bob even a little from the waist, a fighter who barely even moves his feet, and treats defense like an obscure foreign dialect he has no inclination to master. Not surprisingly, he absorbs way too many shots.

Against Damien Wills, whom he wore down on the Floyd Mayweather-Carlos Baldomir undercard, Arreola fought like a locomotive—tough as steel but unable to steer left or right off the tracks. Penciled in to fight again in February, he seems like a personable, intelligent, hard-working young man. He'd be better off getting schooled in the gym by someone like Toney before he goes in for real against someone like Toney.

BOXING SINGLED OUT: Incoming Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada was cleared in an ethics probe for accepting ringside seats to three cards from the Nevada commission. Reid, who accepted the freebies while sponsoring legislation to increase federal oversight of boxing, said he was doing research. He told the Associated Press, "I love the fights anyway, so it wasn't like I was being punished."

Which leads me to the question: Are these investigators nuts? If Reid took free seats to a ballgame, no one would say a word. When a President throws out the first pitch, I rather doubt he used his MasterCard to gain admission.

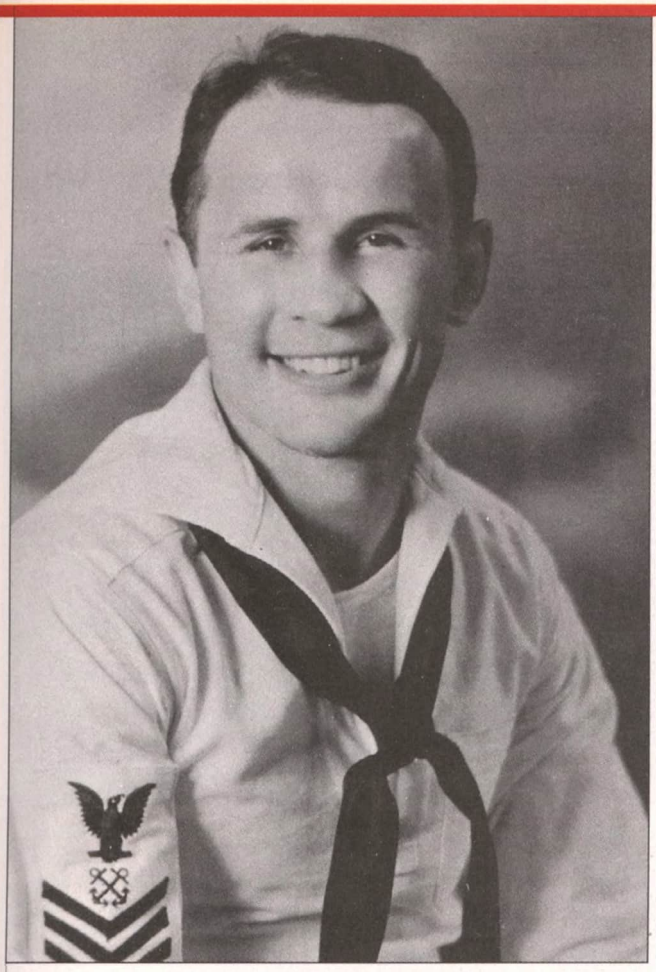
Sen. John McCain, who's sometimes an opponent and sometimes an ally of Reid on boxing legislation, deserves credit for actually paying $1,400 for tickets he shared with Reid. The two high-placed fans both have special ties to boxing that started when they fought in the amateurs. But McCain seems to better understand that the fight game attracts scrutiny other sports don't experience. Not surprising when you consider, for example, that promoter Don King, who was caught rigging an ABC tournament in the '70s, was later enshrined in *both* boxing halls of fame.

Still, boxing is like the working stiff who saves up for a month to go to a nice joint and then a snooty maitre d' leads him and his lady to a table next to the boiler. Big-time team sports are like the pimp and his two hookers who are served champagne on the house after showing up without a reservation.

So many corporate and private jets flock to the Super Bowl that each year it creates headaches for air traffic controllers and airport managers. The executives and their customers who are passengers all swim in a sea of gifts, enjoying extravagant

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Arreola's victory over Wills didn't impress Goldman



Abrams spent four prime years in the U.S. Navy

parties and freebies that include, but are by no means limited to, prime game seats. The right accountants can make all the funny business deductible, meaning the government pays part of the freight while blatant bribery is scrambled through a sports-related blender and poured out as legal.

Measured against all this, I'd say Reid's tickets are awfully small potatoes.

OVERLOOKED VETERAN: Deceased middleweight Georgie Abrams, 48-10-3 (9), nominated for the International Boxing Hall of Fame, failed to get sufficient votes for posthumous induction this summer. Abrams, born in 1918, spent four of his best fighting years in the Navy, much of that time in the Pacific Theater.

He outpointed Billy Soose three times, and just before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Abrams lost to the great Tony Zale in a championship match in the Garden that was considered one of the best middleweight fights in a middleweight golden age.

After the war, when he lost a split decision to Sugar Ray Robinson in the Garden, plenty of ringsiders complained Abrams was robbed. The magnificent Sugar Ray told since-retired matchmaker Jerry Bilderrain that Abrams was the craftiest fighter he ever faced.

Baseball recognizes that the careers of great players such as Ted Williams and Hank Greenberg would have burned even brighter had they not answered their country's call. Boxing should make similar allowances for its athletes.

I should point out I'm a proud elector for the Hall of Fame, so you can classify me as a disappointed (but still optimistic) voter.

ODDS 'N' ENDS: Bernard Hopkins unretired himself so fast they barely had time to take down the microphone he used to say farewell.

For what it's worth, Carlos Baldomir, who's fought them both, believes Zab Judah is actually a little faster than Floyd Mayweather.

Someone should tell Antonio Margarito to put some heat on his jabs. Those pawing, rangefinders he employed repeatedly against Joshua Clottey wouldn't knock a sparrow off a branch, yet left him open. A poor trade.

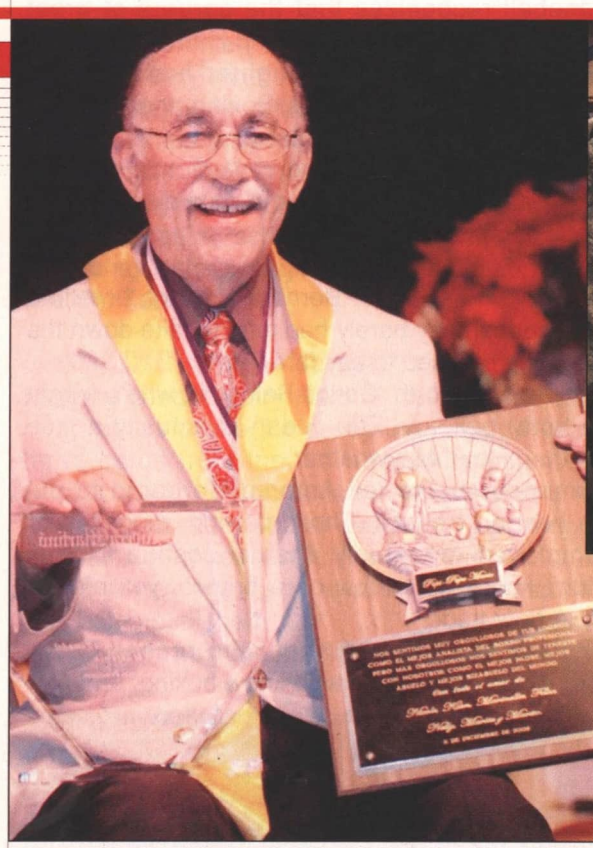
Another thing I liked about the recent *Rocky* movie: It reminded those who know boxing, and perhaps informed those who don't, that there are some truly honorable people in this sport.

MAGOO: To me again. That was Jack Nicholson, not Robert DeNiro in *The Departed.* ■

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Baldomir says Judah is quicker than Mayweather

[Camera Clicks]



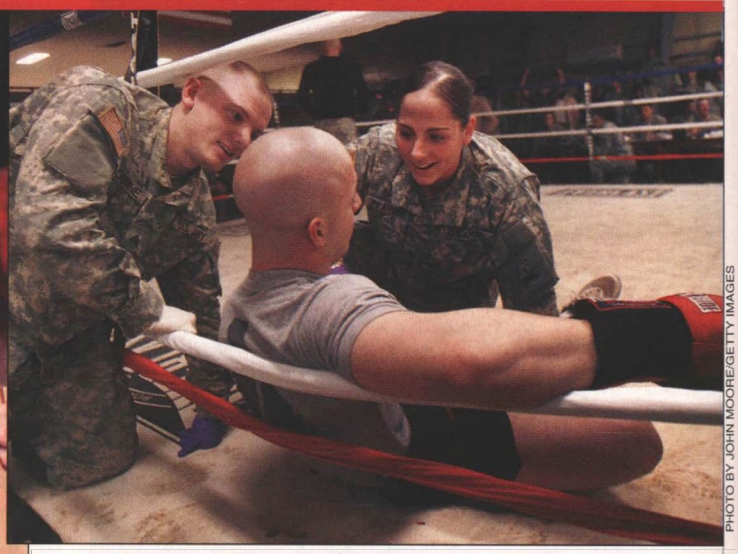


PHOTO BY JOHN MOORE/GETTY IMAGES

At last, we've found a form of fighting in Iraq that isn't going to be debated on the nightly news talk shows. Needing a diversion from the ongoing war, American soldiers at Camp Ramadi in Iraq's Anbar province put on a series of three-rounders on a Friday night in January for hundreds of troops to enjoy. Here we see a boxer who just suffered a kayo loss, but from the looks on the medics' faces, we're going to assume he isn't too badly hurt.

It may not be Canastota, but longtime RING *correspondent Mario Rivera Martino made us proud by being inducted to the Puerto Rico Boxing Hall of Fame.*

PHOTO BY LYNNE SLADKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

During January's FedEx Orange Bowl in Miami between Louisville and Wake Forest, two sports legends and one legend in the making met up on the field, as golfer Arnold Palmer and basketball player Dwyane Wade hung out with Muhammad Ali. Everything was going fine until Palmer mentioned something about "Arnie's Army" and Ali refused to discuss the matter any further, insisting, "I got no quarrel with no Vietcong."

PHOTO BY MIKE D'AMBROSIO

At the Golden Globes, they gave a Lifetime Achievement award to Warren Beatty—but hasn't the life Beatty has lived been reward enough? We think Steve Acunto, the president of the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing, is a far more worthy award recipient, and he was recently given a Lifetime Service award from New York State Athletic Commission Director Ron Scott Stevens (left) and General Council Hugo Spindola (right).

PHOTO BY MARC SEROTA/GETTY IMAGES

"What, me worry?" There's not much Jose Antonio Rivera can do but shrug as the conclusion to his January fight with Travis Simms draws near. Rivera was simply outclassed in this junior middleweight bout, and the look on his face (not to mention the blood on his chest) pretty much tells the story.

PHOTO BY JUAN MABROMATA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

If you're looking to cause a traffic jam on the streets of Buenos Aires, we recommend encouraging rubbernecking by staging a sparring session along the side of a busy road. In a demonstration intended to promote boxing in Argentina, middleweight contender Mariano Carrera and Julio Dominguez attracted a decent crowd of pedestrians ... and a huge crowd of vehicles.

By Don Stewart

Dat Nguyen Featherweight

Dat Nguyen spent most of his young life searching for his place. He couldn't find it in his native Vietnam. Couldn't find it in his adopted home state of Hawaii. Couldn't find it in the cold weather of Oregon, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Couldn't even find it in Southern California.

He might have found it, finally, in Vero Beach, Florida. With accomplished trainer Buddy McGirt in his corner, fight-game vet Jack Luce and advertising exec Jack Matera as his managers, and the Massachusetts-based Cappiello brothers promoting him, the 24-year-old featherweight prospect is making good on his wealth of talent.

Pro Record

2004		
May 1	Ernest Scott, Atlantic City, NJ	KO 1
July 24	Othoniel Espinosa, Atlantic City	W 4
2005		
March 4	James Hope, Reading, PA	W 4
2006		
Aug. 11	Rasool Shakoor, Boston, MA	KO 4
Oct. 28	Edwin Rosado, Uncasville, CT	KO 3
Nov. 24	Charles Jones, Boston	KO 2
Dec. 16	Jeremy Drapal, Miami, FL	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
7	7	0	0	5

"The fighting part is the easiest part in boxing to me," Nguyen said. "You got eight rounds, and then you're done. Getting the right people is the hardest part, staying focused so you don't have any distractions. Now, I feel I have that and I'm grateful."

Finally feeling confident in his conditioning and his surroundings, the energetic Nguyen has reeled off four straight wins by knockout, including a 37-second stoppage of Jeremy Drapal on the Edison Miranda-Willie Gibbs undercard in December. Though only 7-0 with five knockouts, "Dat Be Dat" is already being compared with another Asian slugger.

"He's a clone of Manny Pacquiao," promoter Rich Cappiello claimed. "He's very similar. He's very charismatic and fun to watch. He's real exciting. And he can box and he can punch. Very good hand speed. I think this kid's a total package. He's gonna be a force."

He's also a rarity. Due largely to cultural reasons, Vietnam's boxing history is about as deep as a bowl of soup. Nguyen is one of only a handful of Vietnam-born pros, and he's already the most accomplished. Cappiello sees an international star in the making.

Nguyen was born in Bien Hoa, a suburb of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), seven years after the end of the Vietnam War. His father once was held in a North Vietnamese concentration camp and all of his uncles on both sides of his family fought in the war.

"We were struggling in Vietnam," Nguyen recalled. "We were poor. My mom wanted a better life for all of us." His mother Kim Sa Do moved Dat, then eight-years-old, and his three brothers and two sisters to Oregon in 1990. His father stayed behind, believing the United States was not for him. Dat still speaks with him "once in a great while."

"I think it would've been different if my dad would have came along," he said, "because he wouldn't have allowed me to be in boxing. I'm

(Continued on Page 69)

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ERIK MORALES

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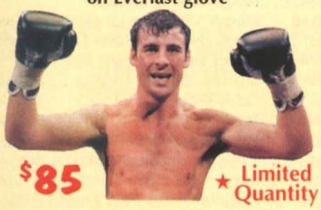
★ Limited Quantity ★

JOE CALZAGHE

Super Middleweight Champion on Everlast glove



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★ Michael Carbajal
★ Barry McGuigan
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Carlos Palomino
★ Sir Henry Cooper
★ Dwight Qawi
★ Vito Antuofermo
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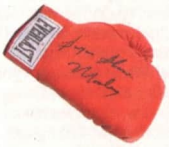

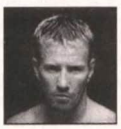

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RICKY HATTON

Still Number One... But For How Long?

Hatton cracks iron-jawed Urango with a teeth-rattling right hand en route to a 12-round unanimous decision in the Englishman's Las Vegas debut. But despite the victory, Hatton's performance was far from scintillating and has critics wondering if he's beginning to slip.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

By Don Stradley

Ricky Hatton arrived in Las Vegas two weeks early for his January 20 bout with Juan Urango. He loved Las Vegas. After all, he's an Elvis Presley fan. He calls his Manchester home Heartbreak Hotel, he owns a karaoke machine stocked with Elvis tunes, and he once spent three grand on a poster signed by Elvis. He's even been known to don a white jump suit and Elvis wig. Hatton saw Sin City as a place where legends were born and reborn.

"It makes me very, very proud to

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Several thousand of Hatton's British fans flew to Las Vegas for the Urango fight, but were unable to re-create the rabid atmosphere of a capacity crowd at the MEN Arena in the champion's hometown of Manchester, where attendance frequently soars to 18,000 or more.

see my name in lights on the Strip," Hatton told ESPN.com. "It's fantastic. I never really had thought, boxing at the workingmen's clubs or social clubs in and around Manchester, around the council estates, [I'd come] to this. It's unbelievable. And also, because I know when my family comes over and my very close friends, my boyhood friends are going to walk down the Strip and see my name up on the big screen and the flashing lights.

"It's really quite emotional, to be honest."

He'd been THE RING's Fighter of the Year in 2005, but in '06 Hatton labored his way to a close decision win over Louis Collazo, not exactly making HBO execs happy with their newest investment. An impressive win over Urango, a musclebound Colombian pug with only 18 pro fights to his credit, would do a lot to please HBO. If all went well, there was talk of a summer bout with Jose Luis Castillo.

Castillo, his reputation blackened after failing to make weight for his rubber match with Diego Corrales in 2006, was fighting on the same Paris Hotel program against Herman Ngoudjo. Once regarded as one of the top 10 fighters on the planet, Castillo was now just another aging contender trying to show the suits that he could still crack. Castillo wants to fight Hatton because he's in debt; Hatton wants Castillo because he still hopes to be a star in America.

"It will be an honor to share the ring with a fighter like Castillo, who has been in so many great fights," Hatton said. "If you want to watch a chess match, tune in to the Floyd Mayweather-De La Hoya fight. But if you want to watch two blokes knock the s--- out of each other, watch me and Castillo."

We must apologize if we're not as excited as we're supposed to be.

Castillo, 55-7-1 (47), struggled with Ngoudjo, 15-1 (9), who showed poise well beyond his minimal experience. A strong final kick in the last four rounds won Castillo the fight on two of the three official scorecards. Mike Ross and Glenn Trowbridge scored it 115-113 for Castillo, while Chuck Giampa saw it for Ngoudjo by the same score. THE RING scored the close bout 115-113 for Castillo.

Hatton won a unanimous decision over Urango, regaining the IBF junior welterweight strap to go along with THE RING belt (he never lost that one—jumping to 147 to fight Colazzo wasn't grounds to lose THE RING championship. Champs from Willie Pep to Bob Foster occasionally strayed from their weight class in search of big money, and weren't "stripped" by flaky alphabet groups). But despite the scoring (judges Dave Moretti, Robert Hoyle, and Jerry Roth turned in identical 119-109 scores for Hatton), the Brit's performance was uneven.

Hatton boxed well in the early rounds, but after Urango shook him up with bodyshots in round five, Hatton reverted to the grappling style

that often mars his fights. He rattled Urango's teeth with a right hook in the 10th, but during the final rounds, Hatton wrestled Urango to an annoying degree. Hatton, 43-0 (30), likes to boast that his fights aren't "tickling contests," but at times the Urango bout could only be described as aggressive snuggling.

Hatton's desire to make it in America has sapped him of something. He was once a dynamo, smashing away at an opponent's ribcage, feeding off the frenzied atmosphere of capacity crowds at Manchester's MEN Arena. In American rings, he loses a step. There's less ferocity. The bodypunches are fewer. Prior to his Las Vegas premiere, Hatton said that he wants to entertain fans, but also wants to use his brains in the ring and avoid getting cut. There were also health rumors going around—an arm injury was mentioned—but the Hatton camp deflected things by saying Hatton had undergone some sort of therapy to "straighten" his arms; he hasn't been able to straighten them at the elbows since childhood.

Maybe Hatton looks less impressive lately because Collazo and Urango are southpaws. Maybe it's because a few thousand jet-lagged Brits don't create the electric howl of a Manchester throng. Maybe it's because the constant weight gains between fights have wrecked his body. Whatever the reason, the fiery Brit who made the legendary Kostya Tszyu quit on his stool in 2005 hasn't come close to that form in his two recent American bouts. Perhaps it's one thing to fight Hatton, to feel the inferno of his boilermaker's roughhousing, but it just doesn't photograph well.

Even the switch from Showtime to HBO has changed our impression of him. Showtime reveled in his majestic ring entrance, and the rocking version of "Blue Moon" that turned the U.K. fans rabid made for good television. On HBO, however, his intro is covered up by constant yakking from the HBO announcing team. Also, while Showtime promos portrayed Hatton as a tough fighter from Manchester, HBO's promos focus on Ricky the pub-crawler. We love Hatton's humor, and his reaction to the nickname given to him by U.K. scandal sheets—"Ricky Fatton"—was to have T-shirts printed with a picture of himself wearing a paper crown and eating a hamburger, but his ring work is getting stale. Why?

Wayne McCullough, former bantam titlist and RING correspondent, thinks Hatton may be spending too much time at the pubs.

"Nobody's saying he can't drink," McCullough told the BBC. "But it's up to him to say, 'I'm getting older, maybe it's time to cut down.' To put

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Even though he'd only had 15 prior pro bouts, Urango proved an extremely tough customer, and in the fifth round badly hurt Hatton with booming bodyshots. From then on, Hatton resorted to hit-and-hold tactics, which caused the fight to become boring.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Castillo, who fought on the Hatton-Urango card, also had a tougher time than anticipated in his 12-round bout with Herman Ngoudjo. But the Mexican rallied well enough during the second half of the fight to earn a split decision and preserve a June fight with Hatton.

10 pounds or so on [between fights] is pretty normal, but when you go any higher, it makes it harder. But that's Ricky Hatton. He goes to the bar and drinks with the boys. So far he's been getting away with it, and it's his choice."

Superstitious types may think the Fighter of the Year tag has something to do with it. *Sports Illustrated* has its cover curse, and our Fighter of the Year award seems to have a curse on it too. Vernon Forrest (remember him?) won in 2002, only to be defeated twice by Ricardo Mayorga. He then missed a couple of years due to shoulder surgery. James Toney won in 2003, and has since been through injuries, a steroid scandal, and two losses to Sam Peter. Glenn Johnson won in 2004, and has since lost twice, morphing back into the journeyman he was before receiving the award. Hatton hasn't fallen on such hard times yet, but he's definitely slipped. Still, a look back at his career shows that he's had these dull streaks before.

Hatton went through a flat period prior to his championship win over Tszyu. He looked dull against Carlos Vilches and Dennis Pederson, only to roar back brilliantly against Michael Stewart and Ray Oliveira. The dull period, according to Hatton's people, was born of his frustration with U.K. promoter Frank Warren, and his inability to get a title shot. When the Tszyu fight materialized, Hatton's performances perked up. The Tszyu fight was Hatton's pinnacle, but since then he was badly cut against Carlos Maussa, and then looked mediocre against Colazzo and Urango. Perhaps the current flat patch could be the result of his frustration with Floyd Mayweather, who has left Hatton in the dust. But with Castillo penciled in as Hatton's summer opponent, Hatton could finally have the motivation he's been lacking.

If Hatton gets back to his 2005 form, that could spell doom for Castillo. After over 60 bouts and countless rounds of sparring in Mexico's meanest gyms, boxing may no longer be fun for Castillo. He rose from his stool for each round against Ngoudjo like a man taking the early morning shift on a sanitation truck. Even fighting five pounds above the lightweight limit that had been so

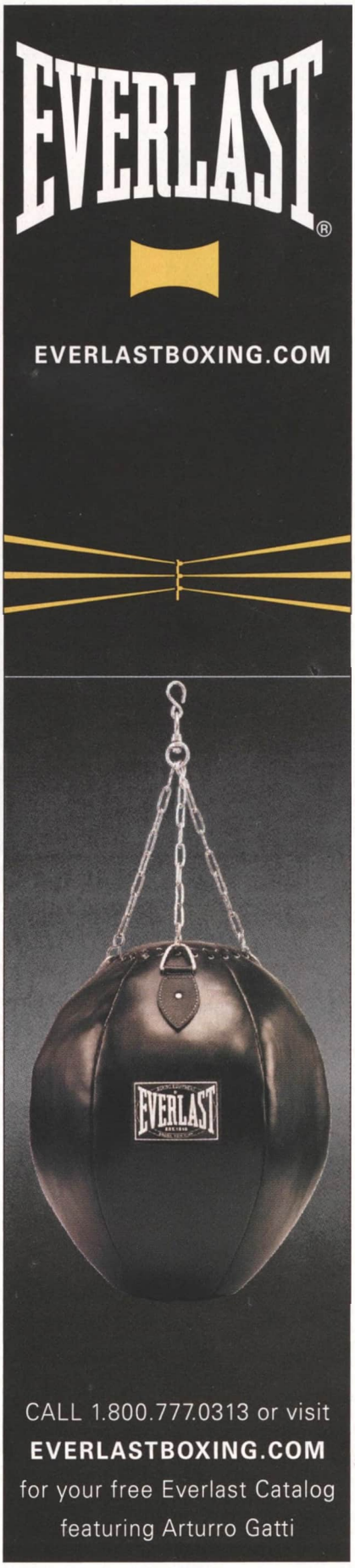
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

A weary looking Castillo raises his arms following his close call against Ngoudjo. If he simply had an off-night, Hatton could be in trouble, but if the Mexican veteran is as battle-worn as he appeared, Hatton should be able to retain the title with relative ease.

hard for him to make, he looked listless. Does Castillo have to come in at cruiserweight before he feels right? Aside from his body attack and the occasional uppercut that broke through Ngoudjo's guard, Castillo seemed weak.

Castillo, like Tszyu, is an aging tough guy, just the sort who comes apart under Hatton's pressure. Young bucks like Colazzo and Urango can go the distance with Hatton and make him look bad, but 33-year-old Castillo may not be so fresh. Also, Hatton knows exactly where Castillo will be—right in front of him—and Hatton won't have to worry about any surprises from Castillo. J.L.C. has fought the same way for years.

In Castillo's favor is that he's a roughneck who doesn't mind clinches. At his sneaky best, he'll slide his arms under an opponent's armpit, and then look to the ref as if to complain. Before the ref can step in, Castillo will jam his



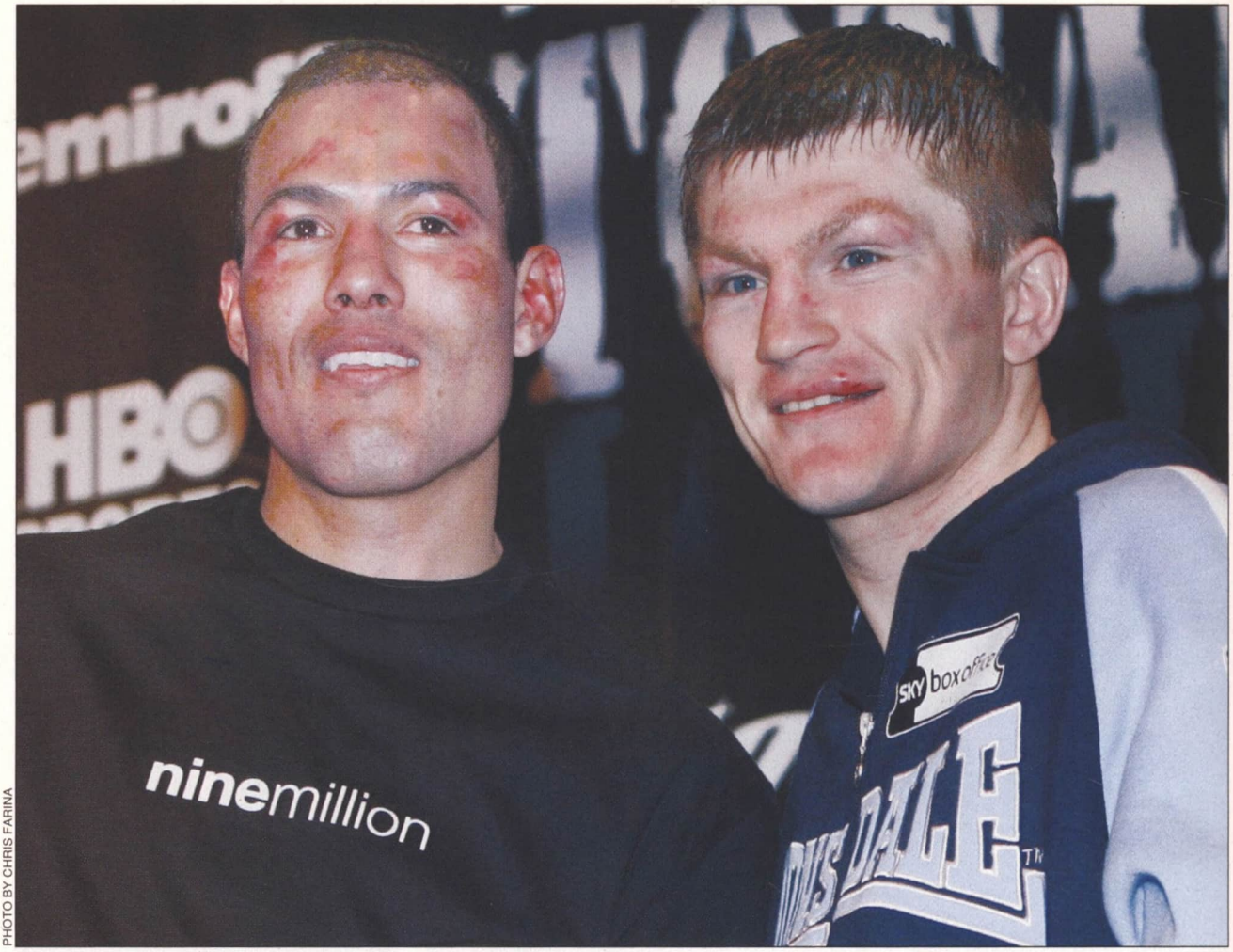


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Despite their taxing battles earlier in the evening, Castillo and Hatton seem pleased with themselves. They are now set to fight this summer in a lucrative bout that will determine the trajectory of their careers.

head (which is the size of a rural mail box) into his opponent's jaw. And if Hatton can't handle bodyshots any better than he did against Urango, he'll wilt after a few of Castillo's bombs to the liver. And Castillo, even though he stunk against Ngoudjo, saves his best stuff for the big fights. Castillo also finishes strong; Hatton seems to tire late. This is all bad news for Hatton.

But even if Castillo rises to the occasion, can Hatton really be satisfied? He'd dreamed of Mayweather, but he's getting the aging Mexican brawler. It can't be what Team Hatton had in mind when they launched their American invasion last year.

Ironically, there is a blockbuster waiting for Hatton back in England, and it's in the form of Junior Witter, the number-two rated RING junior welterweight. But Hatton has a personal grudge against Witter and won't give him the opportunity to make any money. It's strange. Hatton has a natural U.K. feud brewing, the sort that would give English boxing a boost, but he's fiddling around in America with Castillo. Is this the best Hatton's American promoter, Art Pelullo, can do? Is conquering America really *that* important? Granted, there are opportunities to make money here, but for a junior welterweight, the opportunities aren't so awesome.

Hatton may want to follow the trail started by Lennox Lewis, a rare Brit who became a major headliner in America. But Lewis was the heavyweight champ, much more marketable than a junior welterweight, and he had well-known opponents to help his cause. Hatton can't repeat Lewis' steps with Viv Harris and Demetrius Hopkins. After he fights Castillo, he'd be smart to fight Witter in England. It's a natural, and in boxing it's foolish to pass up a natural. By then Hatton will be nearing 30, an advanced age for a physical fighter. At that time he should be content to fight in the U.K. for his Mancunian audience. Hatton should consider the careers of Brits Nigel Benn and Chris Eubank. They did fine without American fanfare. Still, Hatton wants some love from America.

"I've come here to put on a sensational show for fight fans because I recognize I am an entertainer and they want to see my all-action style. No one falls asleep when Ricky Hatton fights and I won't let anyone down," Hatton said before beating Urango.

Unfortunately, Hatton's star power didn't grow in Las Vegas, and some of us are beginning to doze off. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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SAMPLE

THE PETER PRINCIPLE IN REVERSE

"The Nigerian Nightmare" Proves The Exception To The Rule

By William Dettloff
PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

The promise of change is a wonderful lure. When we want it to be so, we'll believe in the possibility for all we're worth, despite eons of human history that demonstrate quite clearly that as a species, we are no good at it. We believe in it yet because at its most useful, it gives hope to both ends: to the party being lied to and the one doing the lying—even if they are one in the same.

We'll be better. Better spouses, better parents, better employees or citizens, better lovers, better children, better friends. We'll lose the gut, stop the boozing, be faithful, stop speeding, quit smoking, love forever, help more around the house. We'll be better. Change is right around the corner. Improvement imminent. Then we fail.

You can promise what you want: It is the rare occasion that real, lasting improvement occurs in anyone. We are

Peter smacks Toney in the face with his much-improved jab en route to a convincing 12-round decision in their January rematch. The one-sided victory boosted the Nigerian's profile and pretty much ended Toney's days as a major player in the heavyweight division.

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

It looked like Peter might stop Toney when he stunned him with a series of right hands in the opening round (above), but when referee Jorge Alonso momentarily halted the action to warn Peter about hitting in back of the head (below), Toney was able to survive and last the entire 12 rounds.

what we are. People don't change, not for the better anyway, and once grown, they don't get demonstrably, fundamentally better. That applies especially to fighters and even more so to heavyweights. It's fantasy, mere gimmick, when promoters, trainers, and managers promise you their fighter has changed, improved, is in the best shape of his life, has learned his lesson, won't ever lose again.

That is, unless you're Samuel Peter, who was so much better the second time around against James Toney, on January 6 at the Seminole Hard Rock in Hollywood, Florida, that he made up for thousands of well-intentioned human failures in 12 mostly one-sided rounds of pretty darn competent heavyweight prizefighting.

You can argue that Arturo Gatti changed and improved, that Kostya Tszyu did too, and Bernard Hopkins and Marco Antonio Barrera. It's not the same as what Peter did. Gatti and Tszyu reverted back to their original styles, more or less, when they stopped punching so much and started boxing. Hopkins went from right-hand puncher to conservative counterpuncher when his body started telling him he couldn't sustain all-out assaults anymore. And Barrera could box and use his head well before he chose it as a full-time strategy (see his second fight with Junior Jones). He slugged because it was more fun.

Peter is a young, raw guy who appeared to become significantly less raw between the first and second Toney fights. That he is a puncher and therefore by nature disdainful toward technical convention at all makes what he showed against Toney more noteworthy yet.

"He showed signs of it in the first Toney fight," said Al Bernstein, who called both fights for Showtime. "He put his punches together better and showed better stamina. For the second fight, two things happened: He got in better shape and he added a lot of things to his arsenal." If you saw the fight, you know what Bernstein means.

"He threw uppercuts," he said. "I'd never seen him throw an uppercut before. He used his jab much better, and his punches were straighter. And when he got Toney in a corner or on the ropes, he turned around and fought lefty to give him a different look and made it harder for him to counter."

That's a lot to have added to one's repertoire, especially in the span of four months. The way Peter tells it, it wasn't so much improvement, but the real Samuel Peter coming to the fore. And he credits Toney with bringing it out.

"He made me do some things that I was ready to do," Peter told THE RING. "It was important for me to fight like I did if I want to get where I need to go. It's what I do in the gym, what I've always done, but not in my fights. Toney brought it out of me."

Peter's manager, Ivailo Gotzev, agrees. "Samuel has evolved as a fighter and is finally digging into the tools he possesses that we always knew he had. He never reached out to his skills before because he's molded as a puncher and wants to knock everyone out. He is in the mold of a puncher and it's hard to get him out of that state of mind."

Many in the fight press initially credited veteran trainer Stacey McKinley with Peter's technical improvement. It was, after all, McKinley's first camp with Peter. Gotzev prefers to credit the fighter and the team, saying that McKinley did an excellent job in the corner and a good job motivating Peter in camp, getting him up in the morning to run in the sand. But that Pops Anderson remains the lead trainer and the strongest voice on the team, and that Manuel Masson, a trainer from Chicago, put Peter through the paces in the gym.

Still, it's curious that, prior to the fight, McKinley told fight writer Graham Houston that he wanted to improve Peter's conditioning and his balance, he wanted to triple the number of jabs Peter threw in a fight, and straighten out his punches. Peter, at 234, weighed eight pounds less than he did for the first Toney fight and showed real improvement in each of McKinley's target areas. Coincidence?

At any rate, many see Wladimir Klitschko, the only man to beat Peter, as improved of late too. It's easy to think so, considering how he looked in his bad period, against Corrie Sanders, Lamon Brewster, Dvarryl Williamson—and, yes, Peter. But as good as he was against Chris Byrd (a wonderful styles matchup for him) and Calvin Brock, think back to how formidable he was pre-Sanders. He's just now getting back to where he was, not moving forward. It's true that Emanuel Steward is running things now and that can't hurt, but as far as we can tell, Klitschko is essentially the same fighter he always has been: too powerful for most guys, too vulnerable for one with the right weapons.

Peter, on the other hand, by whipping the 249-pound Toney by the perfectly representative scores of 119-108 and 118-110 (twice), showed another side of himself and effectively erased the squabbling around the decision he received in their first match, when a majority of observers thought Toney outfought him by a close margin and deserved the nod. This time there was no question about who won.

From time to time, Toney landed some excellent shots, but he never hurt Peter. The combination of a big punch, improving boxing skills, and a cement chin has made Peter a formidable fighter.

Indeed, Peter, 28-1 (22), might have stopped Toney in the first round if not for the actions of referee Jorge Alonso. A series of right hands sent Toney stumbling toward the ropes in the bout's opening minute, but just as Peter prepared to go after him, Alonso jumped in and warned Peter against hitting on the back of the head. Apparently, the Toney camp's prefight lobbying against this frequent Peter tactic was successful, but in truth, Toney's method of slipping right hands by ducking low almost guar-

Peter claims that he's always done the things he did against Toney in the gym, but needed the rematch to bring them out in a real fight. Whether the improvement is permanent or just an aberration remains to be seen.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

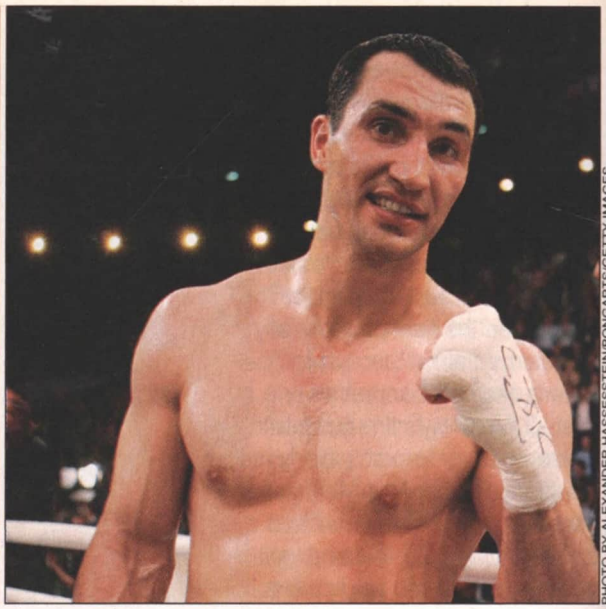


PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSESTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Who's next for Peter? The WBC wants its titleholder, Oleg Maskaev (left), to fight Peter next, but as of press time there was talk that Maskaev might opt to take on IBF beltholder Wladimir Klitschko (right) or a chance he might fight former world champ Vitali Klitschko, who is considering a comeback.

anteed that Peter's overhand rights would land there.

Peter deals with that lost opportunity philosophically. "That's just the way God wanted it to turn out," he said. "It was supposed to happen that way so I could prove myself. It was better for me because it showed everybody that I can fight the way I did and everybody is very happy it turned out the way it did. Everybody enjoyed the fight; I've been getting calls ever since, people telling me they are very happy about the fight. I am too."

Not so much for Toney, 69-6-3 (43), who was felled in the second by a long, straight jab that caught him with his feet parallel and was the result not of Peter's power, but of its distinction as the third jab in a series. Toney had slipped the first two and that's why you punch in combination, boys and girls.

It never got much better for Toney, though he did manage to avoid getting floored again. He even had his moments, here and there, when he slammed Peter with hard right hands that might have concussed any number of cruiserweights or even smaller heavyweights. But Peter, outside of a chest comically small and disproportionate to the rest of his upper body, is a redwood of a heavyweight, and Toney could not move him. Between his inability to hurt Peter and Peter's newfound acumen, Toney had little chance. It didn't help him that he was not nearly what he was once.

It was supposed to be Toney who was better this time, and how couldn't he be, what with fitness "expert" Billy Blanks holding his hand, showing him how to run and do sit-ups and whatnot. (As if Toney hasn't been an athlete for 20 years and didn't know how to get in shape if he wanted to.) Not to mention the job Blanks did coaching him to consume prodigious amounts of water to "clean him out." (Because clearly many potential hall-of-fame careers have been stymied by inadequately rinsed innards. Alas, the fitness business lives on the "you can change" fantasy.)

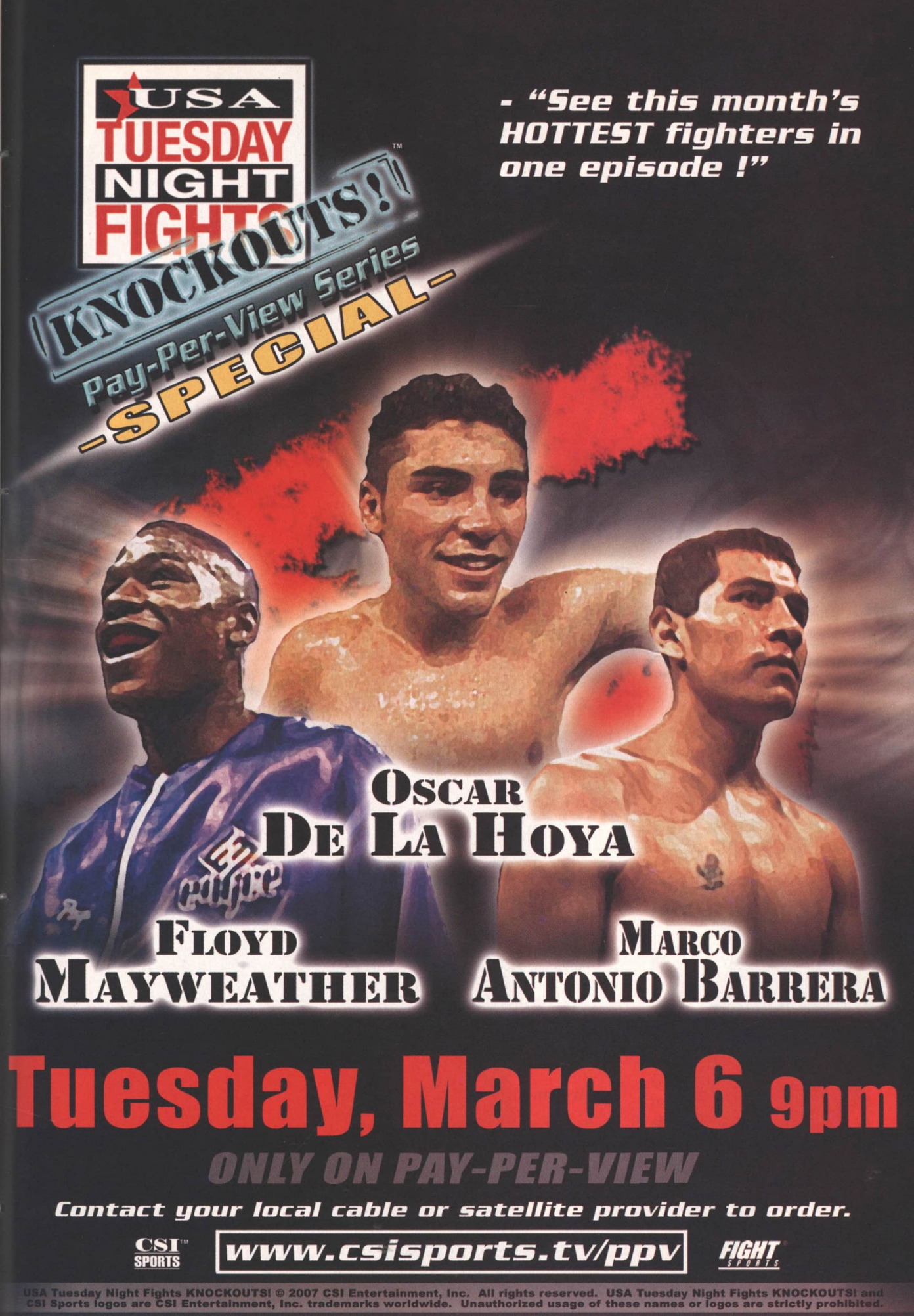
That come fight time Blanks was permitted to hold Toney's spit bucket in the corner and occasionally offer bits of salient advice ("Drink more water; you're not cleaned out!" we could swear we heard between the fifth and sixth rounds) was, as we see it, rather an insult to head cornerman Freddie Roach and any other real fight guy with whom Toney and Roach associate. But that's not our fight. We'll note simply that Toney thought he needed to improve and hired a guy who made his money doing infomercials. But it was Peter who was better.

That Toney's strategy of getting in condition didn't pay off is as much about the state of his worn-to-the-nub body as it is about anything, and also about what each guy needed going into the rematch: Toney, somewhat inexplicably, thought he needed someone to show him how to get in shape. Peter needed to improve his game. He did.

That Peter, whom many of us had pigeon-holed, if not dismissed altogether, as a fairly clumsy, limited, one-dimensional clubber, turned out to be a smarter, better fighter this time around—to have improved—is no small thing. The Peter that lost every second of his fight with Klitschko, save for the combined 24 seconds Klitschko spent taking counts, and generally showed terrible technique and questionable conditioning appears to have vanished, at least for one fight. If he's gone for good, it not terribly promising news for the rest of the heavyweights.

"Here's the interesting question," said Bernstein. "Toney landed some monstrous punches on Peter and never hurt him, and Klitschko hurt him but couldn't floor him late in their fight when he landed that left hook. If Peter has as good a chin as he appears to have and if this work ethic continues, there is no question he'll be the man to beat in the heavyweight division. It's going to be very hard for these guys to beat him."

We still won't believe it when this or that manager tells us his fighter is better than ever. We know better. Fighters don't change, heavyweights especially. But every once in a while, we see it happen. A guy like Peter slips through. And he gives the rest of us hope. ■



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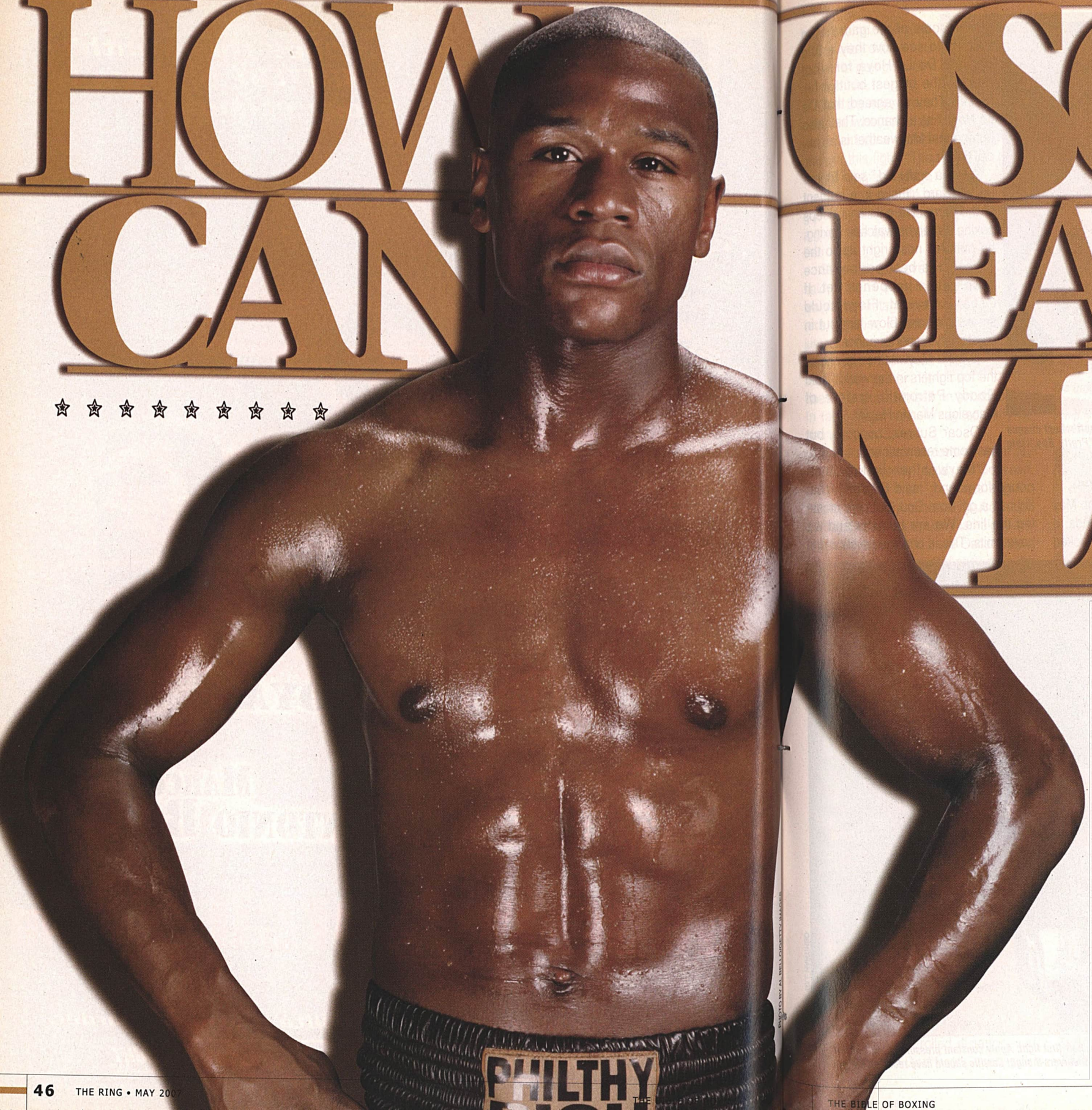
HOW CAN OSCAR BEAT THIS MAN?



Nine World-Class Trainers Offer Their Advice

By Don Stradley

"I'd have Oscar play a chess game with him and see who's the best counterpuncher."

—Joe Goosen

"Oscar ain't no dummy. He knows he'll have to fight the hell out of him. He knows he'll have to turn it into a street fight."

—Wille Savannah

Short of using a baseball bat on him in a dark alley, there doesn't seem to be a way to beat Floyd Mayweather. It's not as if he's unpredictable—he does the same thing for each fight. He starts out in the counter-puncher's stance, blocking and slipping shots. Like a good street bully, Mayweather senses when an opponent's confidence has wilted. By the middle rounds, he's hitting you, taunting you a bit. Eventually he's in complete control. He doesn't tire; he

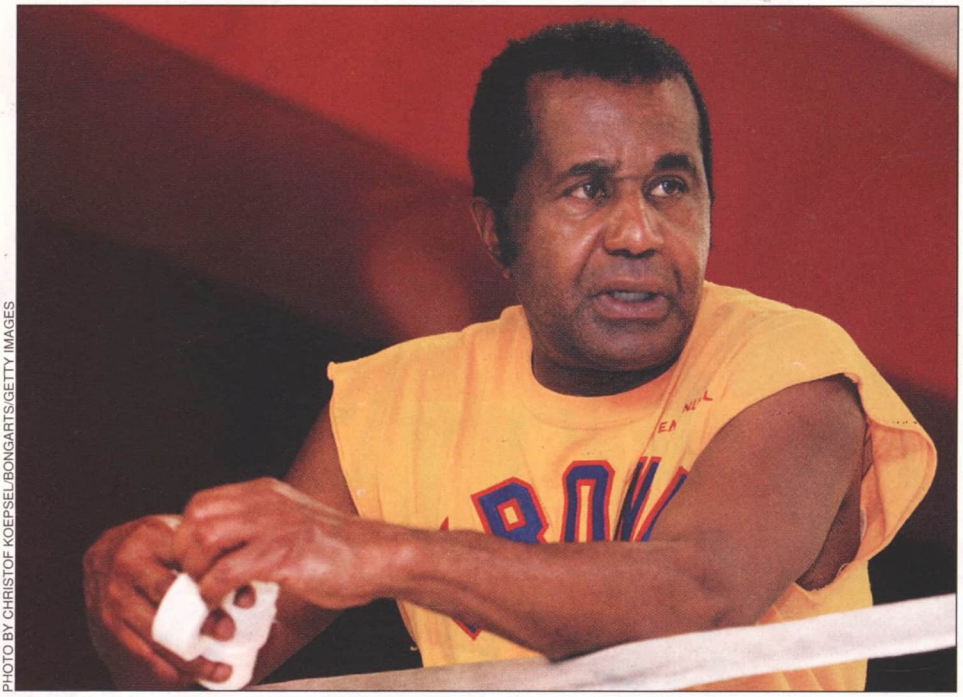


PHOTO BY CHRISTOF KOEPSEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Emanuel Steward, who trained De La Hoya for a couple of fights, believes his former pupil's best chance for success against Mayweather is out-slick him by laying back and trying to force "Pretty Boy" into becoming the aggressor.

doesn't make mistakes. His fragile hands and his tendency to be too defensive don't take away from his being perhaps the best fighter in the game.

Oscar De La Hoya, 38-4 (30), is meeting Mayweather, 37-0 (24), on May 5. They'll be fighting at 154 pounds, a first for Mayweather. THE RING checked in with some of the game's top trainers to see how they would prepare De La Hoya for what may be the biggest bout of his career. They all agreed that De La Hoya has a chance. They also agreed that Mayweather is a special fighter.

"He's a crafty kid," said Emanuel Steward. "Floyd is a student of the game. He eats and sleeps boxing. When he watches boxing, he puts his nose right up to the TV set. His best performance hasn't even happened yet. If Oscar isn't right, Floyd could smoke him and blow him out in an electrifying performance."

"I think Mayweather is one of the top fighters in the world," said Goody Petronelli, trainer of Marvelous Marvin Hagler.

Oscar Suarez, concurs, but has some reservations.

"Mayweather is the best, pound-for-pound," said Suarez. "That kid has a gift from God. But he's crossing the line. We are humans and we have limits. This is one line he shouldn't

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

One school of thought is that the way to beat Mayweather is to do as Jose Luis Castillo did in their first fight: Apply constant pressure, back him into the ropes, and then fire away. Even though he came out on the short end of a close decision, lots of observers thought Castillo should have received the nod.

be crossing, because of the size difference. Oscar is going to run through him."

Our trainers were split on whether size would make a difference in this fight. "The weight is an advantage for Oscar, because a good big man will beat a good little man," said Petronelli.

Steward, however, said, "I don't think the weight advantage matters because Floyd is just as strong as Oscar. Oscar has never been a physical fighter. He doesn't impose himself on an opponent. In fact, Mayweather may actually be stronger than Oscar."

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The trainers interviewed for this article were pretty evenly divided as to whether De La Hoya's best chance of victory would be to box at long range behind his jab (above) or turn slugger (below). Complicating things, however, is the fact that Mayweather is a far more skillful opponent than either Fernando Vargas or Ricardo Mayorga.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

So if size isn't important, what is? "It's about strategy," said Joe Goossen. "When Oscar tries to press a good boxer, he's only minimally successful. I'd say Oscar has to use his height and reach advantage. I'd have Oscar play a chess game with him and see who's the best counterpuncher. If Oscar is in a boxer/counterpuncher mode that night, he'll pick up on mistakes by Mayweather. That's his only shot, to try to counter Mayweather taking the lead. Turn Mayweather into the pressure guy; let him make the first move so Oscar can counterpunch. Oscar's got great defense, and real quick hands, and if he gets into the type of shape he was in for Mayorga, he'll do well. But it's about strategy."

A chess match with Mayweather? Sounds risky.

"You have to know what Mayweather does well and find a way to negate those things," said Teddy Atlas, *Friday Night Fights* analyst and former trainer of Michael Moorer. "Oscar has an advantage in experience and height. So you'd start with that. Mayweather has the advantage in youth and speed, so you'd want to be respectful and understanding of that.

"One way to beat Mayweather's speed is with controlled distance, controlled range. Don't stay within the

range where he can use his speed. Know where that range is and separate yourself when you want to negate his ability to get combinations off. When you are in range, look to time him. Timing can beat speed. Don't get into a flat-out speed contest with him, but control the range with your height, and time him before he can get started. Control the outside part of the fight; keep him at the end of the jab, at the end of your punches. I would definitely use feints. Mayweather likes to anticipate punches and look for counters, so I'd try to feint him at the right time. Throw his rhythm off and get him to make preliminary movements that will keep him off-balance."

Steward agreed that Oscar should use brains rather than brawn. "I'd like to see him fight an intelligent fight. I'd like to see him fight the way he fought in 1994, '95, when he was coming up and had a beautiful jab. I'd have him box and pull Mayweather out of his plan of laying back. I'd have him train with fast guys and box them. I'd have Oscar prepared to try to win a decision. Oscar can be a very good boxing machine."

Some trainers, however, have more mayhem in mind. "Oscar likes to box and move, but it depends who you box," said Petronelli. "If a guy is a better boxer than me, I'm gonna be the banger, and I'm gonna put pressure on him. That's what Oscar needs to do." Willie Savannah, trainer of WBA lightweight titleholder Juan Diaz, said, "Oscar ain't no dummy. He knows he'll have to fight the hell out of him. He knows he'll have to turn it into a street fight."

Slick fighters such as Mayweather sometimes have trouble with awkward, pressure fighters. His undefeated streak was almost snapped in 2002 when Jose Luis Castillo pushed Mayweather for 12 rugged rounds. Had the judges been more appreciative of Castillo's work, Castillo would have won. Instead, Mayweather kept the zero in his loss column and defeated Castillo handily in their rematch. Still, Castillo's first effort has been largely accepted as the way to beat Mayweather.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

De La Hoya has spent far more time in a business suit than he has in boxing trunks the past three years. Some trainers see that as a bad thing, while others believe the rest has been good for his body.

"Castillo almost made him quit," said John Ruiz' former trainer, Norman Stone. "Floyd was looking for the door. Castillo cut the ring off and didn't give room to breathe. I don't know if Oscar is that type of fighter. But he's not gonna beat him by boxing.

"You'd have to bring in a lot of speedy guys for Oscar to spar. Floyd hops in and he hops out. Floyd can hit you 10 times and then ask you to make change for a quarter. Make sure Oscar puts a lot of pressure on him. It's tough to get Oscar to fight that way. Oscar has lost some speed, but the extra weight will take some of Floyd's speed too."

"I would use the strategy of pressure," said Savannah. "I just can't see Floyd going 12 hard rounds with Oscar. Oscar's not like Zab Judah, falling all over the place and trying to look cute; he's in control. Just get in there and put a lot of pressure on him. And when he gets him on the ropes, don't just stand there and wait like Castillo did in their second fight. Castillo would cut the ring off on Mayweather, but he wouldn't do anything when he got there. And you've got to understand, Oscar is gonna be 20 pounds heavier than Castillo was that night. I think Oscar can be a slugger when he needs to."

Bad idea, said Goossen. "If he tries to pressure Mayweather, he'll walk into punches. I'd turn it into a chess match. If that doesn't work, then you'll have to go for broke and turn the pressure on later. Oscar is one of the great counterpunchers of all-time. It's too late to turn him into Jose Louis Castillo."

"There's a certain way for a good physical fighter to beat Mayweather, but I don't know if Oscar can do it," said Steward. "He has to land, then move away in a circle, and counter. They may try to have him fight like a pressure fighter, but that's not his real nature. Besides, Floyd has seen pressure fighters all his life. Oscar's best chance will be to fight a smart, technical fight. He's not Jake LaMotta."

Suarez still looks at Mayweather as the one that got away. "When I had Acelino Freitas at 135, I thought we would get Mayweather," said Suarez. "I was getting Acelino ready for Mayweather, so I've looked at this kid every day for years. If you remember when Emanuel Burton fought him, he beat Mayweather to the punch because he was being more consistent. Imagine Oscar De La Hoya being that consistent, but with the punching power he possesses. Oscar doesn't have to try to knock him out, but if he's consistent he can knock him out in eight or 10 rounds.

"I'd focus on stamina and conditioning. I'd do a lot of resistance training; weightlifting is a no-no. I'd get him ready for a consistent fight. It shouldn't go 12 rounds, but just in case it goes 12, I'd get him to where he won't get tired. The

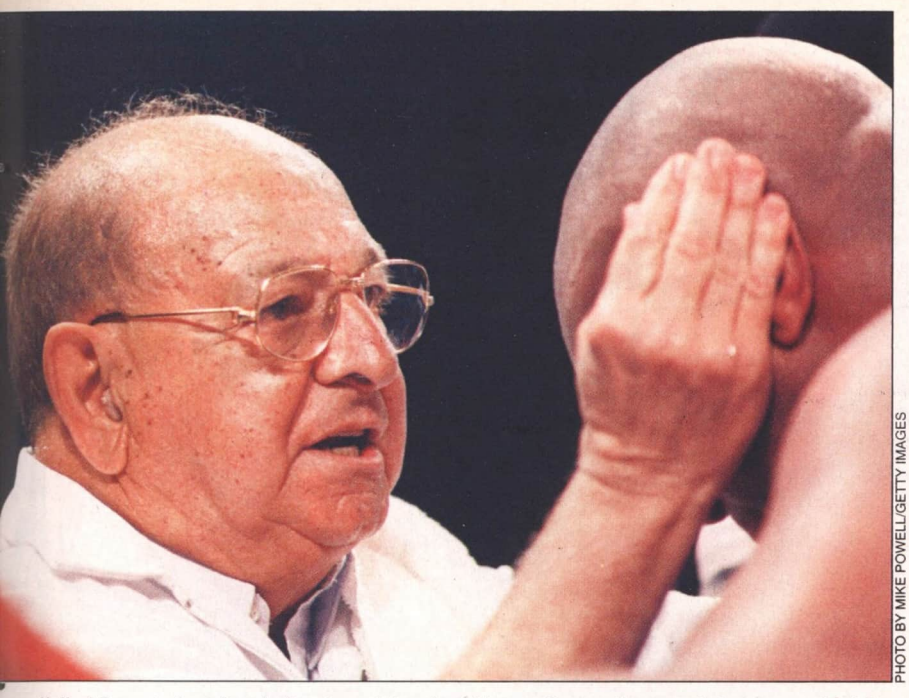


PHOTO BY MIKE POWELL/GETTY IMAGES

Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee, pictured working on George Foreman between rounds of the Axel Schulz fight in 1995, has a simple recipe for success: Let Oscar be Oscar.

big punches against Mayweather will be the left hook followed by a right hand. And then jab, right hand, jab. Mayweather likes to tuck his chin and back up, but Oscar can get him with bodyshots."

Harold Knight offered these comments: "Floyd drops his hands, and Oscar's best shot is the left hook. De La Hoya needs to get off first, punch to the body and arms early. But there are so many intangibles. I don't think Floyd can knock Oscar out, but I think Oscar can knock him out. Keep in mind, Floyd has never been in a mega-fight like this, but Oscar is used to it."

Some say De La Hoya doesn't have to do anything out of the ordinary.

"Oscar doesn't need any special preparation," said Hall of Fame trainer Angelo Dundee. "I'd just let Oscar be Oscar De La Hoya. He's used to fighting guys smaller than he is, and Mayweather is definitely the smaller guy. We're gonna have the upset of the year because I think De La Hoya will beat Mayweather. I really do. All he has to do is be himself. Style-wise, De La Hoya has the style to beat Mayweather. He's got a devastating left hook, a great left hook to the liver. He's well-preserved; he's never taken no bad lickings. The only mistake Oscar ever made was against Trinidad, the last three rounds. He don't make that mistake anymore.

"I'm so happy for this fight. It's all we've got to hang our hat on this year. It gives us something to crow about. This is a shot in the arm for boxing."

Some, especially Steward, worry that De La Hoya hasn't been active enough, but Suarez thinks De La Hoya benefits from fighting infrequently. "The way Mayweather trains, he does too much. He doesn't let his body rest. De La Hoya is more rested." But a back injury prior to fighting Felix Sturm in '05, and an arm injury in the Mayorga fight, makes us wonder if De La Hoya is showing signs of age. Still, De La Hoya has a certain intangible that has always impressed Steward.

"Oscar has the biggest balls of any man I've ever known," said Steward. "This is really a big gamble for him. But he loves a challenge."

Testicles aside, De La Hoya should just implement a strategy that has worked in the past: keep the rounds close, and hope the Las Vegas judges are kind. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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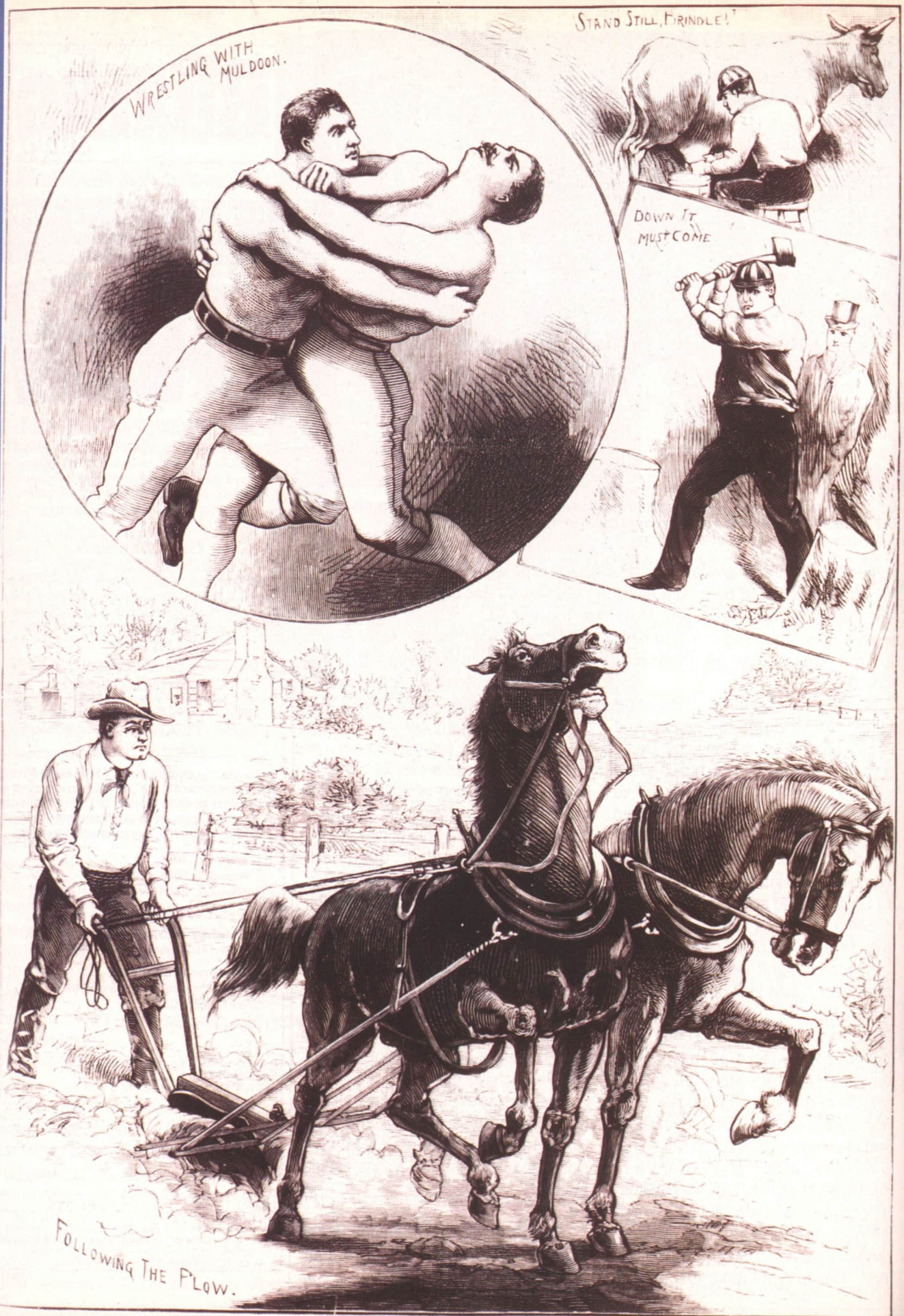

WRESTLING WITH MULDOON.
"STAND STILL, BRINDLE!"
DOWN IT MUST COME
FOLLOWING THE PLOW.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

LOOKING FOR THAT EXTRA EDGE?

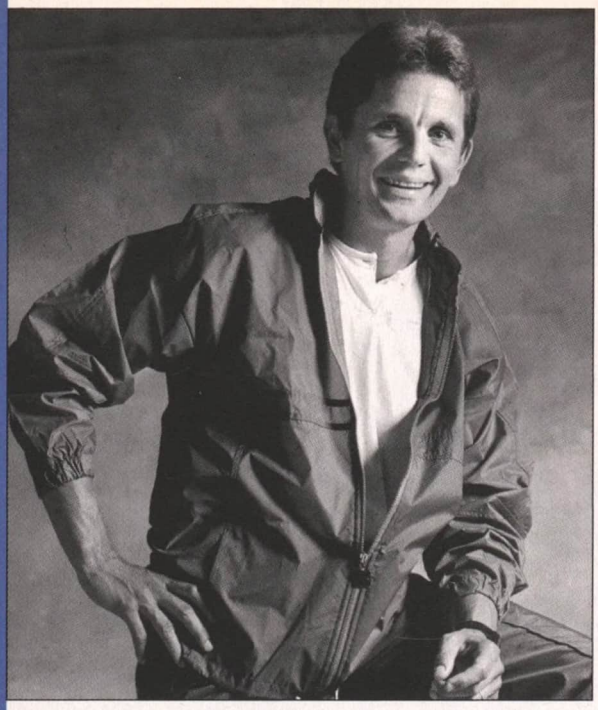
Fitness Gurus Aren't Always The Answer

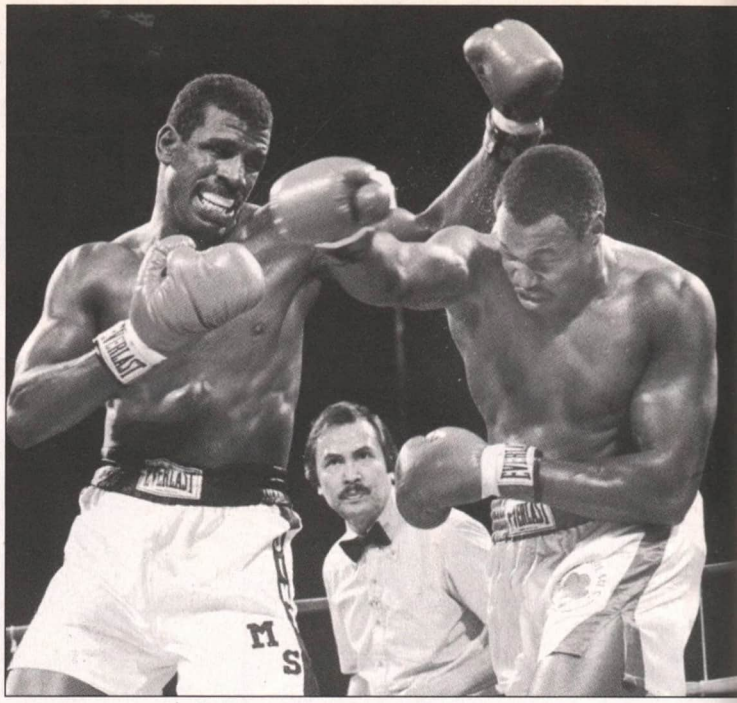
From John L. Sullivan milking cows and plowing fields at trainer William Muldoon's farm (opposite page) to James Toney hiring Tae Bo specialist Billy Blanks (above), boxers have long turned to unconventional training gurus to give them an edge. That's Blanks on the far right, wearing a green sweat suit, talking things over with long-time Team Toney member James "Pops" Arthur, while "Lights Out" takes a breather in the corner.

By Don Stradley

When James Toney hired Tae Bo specialist Billy Blanks to help train him for his rematch with Sam Peter, it seemed unlikely that the headstrong Toney would listen to a fitness guru from La-La land. But Blanks had flushed the fat out of Oprah and Queen Latifa. Maybe he could do the same for a lard-ass boxer.

Billy Blanks was lucky. He came into Toney's camp at a time





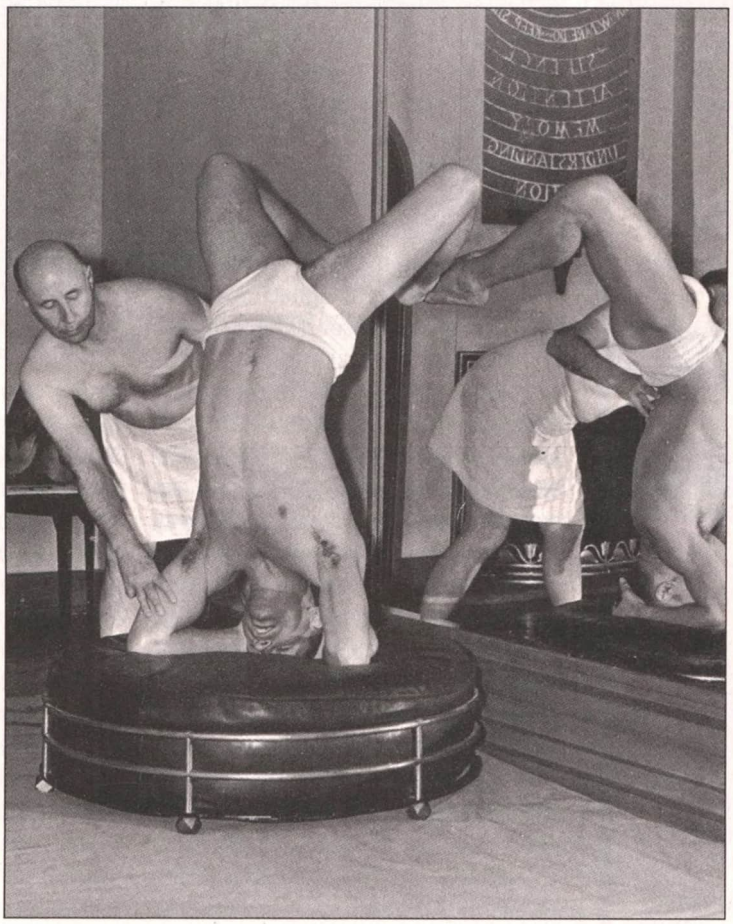
Conditioning specialist Mackie Shilstone (above left) established his reputation in the boxing community by helping light heavyweight champ Michael Spinks gain enough muscle to take the heavyweight title away from Larry Holmes in 1985 (above right). More recently, Shilstone did a similar job for former middleweight king Bernard Hopkins, who added 15 pounds and beat Antonio Tarver to win the light heavy title (below).

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

when training gurus and health experts are fairly commonplace. It hasn't always been that way. Boxing, for all of its outlaw glamour, is as conservative as an Iowa Republican when it comes to new ideas, especially in regards to training.

"When I first broke into boxing, they acted like what I was doing was from another planet," said conditioning coach Tim Hallmark, who earned acclaim as part of Evander Holyfield's cutting edge camp in the late-1980s. But Hallmark's entry into boxing was joyous compared to the negative yawps that greeted nutrition expert Mackie Shilstone.

In 1985, when Shilstone made headlines by helping light heavyweight champion Michael Spinks bulk up to heavyweight, he seemed like a fast-talking hustler with peculiar training methods. Angelo Dundee offered this bon mot regarding Shilstone: "Nutrition sucks." But when Spinks wrested the championship from Larry Holmes, becoming the first 175-pound champion in boxing history to win the heavyweight laurels, Shilstone became an institution. He later worked with Riddick Bowe, Roy Jones, and, most recently, Bernard Hopkins. But while Shilstone's pioneering efforts changed the way fighters train, some fighters took the new methods to an extreme.



Heavyweight contender Lou Nova turned to yoga in an attempt to relax prior to big fights. When Nova challenged champion Joe Louis in 1941, he was so relaxed he went to sleep in the sixth round.

"These experts can be an asset, but they get on my nerves," said Emanuel Steward. "I keep their involvement to a minimum because I like to keep my hands in everything. I even cook for the fighter. A lot of times you'll see an experienced trainer just sitting around because the experts have the fighter on the beach doing some crazy conditioning thing. It's also a headache as far as scheduling."

Holyfield packed his training camps with as many gurus as possible, including Hallmark, bodybuilders Chasee Jordan and Lee Haney, gymnastics instructor Marya Kennett, and punch stat specialists Logan Hobson and Bob Cannobio. Holyfield's dedication to scientific techniques earned him the nickname "Robochamp" and created a futuristic mystique around him. Steward, who trained Holyfield during the middle of his career, still speaks highly of Hallmark and Haney, but he thinks certain pugs become too smitten with new techniques and stray from the basics.

"I spoke to Fernando Vargas before he fought Oscar De La Hoya, and he was all excited about his training," said Steward. "He was talking about all of the things he was doing, and I asked, are you doing any boxing, or are you just jumping over logs?" As for Holyfield, "He became more interested in exercising than sparring. He was doing all of these crazy stunts and lifting weights, and he had a dozen people following him around saying, 'You're the man, Evander!' But that's no substitute for bone-on-bone sparring."

Shilstone, who advised Bowe prior to his two victories over Holyfield (Shilstone always points out that he didn't work with Bowe the time he lost to Holyfield) sensed something was wrong in Holyfield's camp. He recently told secondsout.com, "He didn't have anyone to take control of the whole system. He had everyone pulling for their own reputation, and there wasn't one common philosophy of winning.

"When a client comes to me, I make them understand that I am in charge of everything they do. If they catch a cold, I deal with it. I even get in and give input to the trainer. I won't do the boxing training, but I'll give recommendations as to the amount of rounds, the total minutes of training, how long we are going to fight for. I do that after extensive evaluation of the opponent, the enemy. It's called the Mackie System. And it's unbeatable. I take command and control. And that's the only way I get involved."

Hopkins has expressed a desire to fight heavyweight titlist Oleg Maskaev, believing Shilstone can assist him, just as he did for Hopkins' rise from 160 to 175 for his championship win over Antonio Tarver. If Hopkins gets popped, however, or if his old legs finally give out, we'll never read about it in Shilstone's biography. Gurus have a publicist's way of leaving out the bad stuff. But if Hopkins wins, it could be Shilstone's ultimate achievement, having taken a 41-year-old middleweight all the way to a heavyweight title.

Shilstone, director of health and fitness for the Ochsner Heart and Vascular Institute in New Orleans and author of *The Fat Burning Bible*, was initially approached to work with Toney. He turned down the offer. There's no telling

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how Toney and Shilstone would have gotten along. The problem with gurus, even one with impeccable credentials like Shilstone, is that they are often as stubborn and egotistical as the champions they're hired to train. In fact, it's been that way since the days of William Muldoon and John L. Sullivan.

A professional wrestler and physical culture expert, Muldoon was recruited by Sullivan's camp to train the debauched champion for his 1889 bout with Jake Kilrain. Sullivan's manager, Jimmy Wakely, and Charlie Johnston, a New York gambler who was paying Sullivan's expenses, paid Muldoon an unheard of sum of $10,000 to keep Sullivan in line.

Muldoon brought Sullivan to his farm in upstate New York, where he helped the world famous fighter shed 40 pounds. Muldoon designed Sullivan's diet, ran with him, kept him out of local taverns, and even slept in the same room with him. Sullivan and Muldoon had their disagreements—Muldoon occasionally threatened the fighter with a baseball bat or wrestled him to the ground—but the end result saw Sullivan in the best shape of his career. Sullivan stopped Kilrain in the 75th round. Unfortunately, he and Muldoon parted ways under bitter circumstances. The bout, fought when prizefighting was illegal in many states, led to the arrest and jailing of Sullivan. The champion wrongly accused Muldoon of turning state's evidence against him; Muldoon called Sullivan a "coward" and an "ingrate."

Muldoon later refused to train Sullivan for his bout with Jim Corbett. Instead, Sullivan was trained by Phil Casey, a U.S. handball champion. Casey had no control over Sullivan, and the drunken champ lost to Corbett in 21 rounds. Years later, a sober Sullivan allegedly approached Muldoon to train him for a comeback against reigning champ Bob Fitzsimmons. Muldoon refused him again.

In Sullivan's dotage, he recalled Muldoon fondly, amusing audiences with tales of Muldoon's sadistic methods. Perhaps Sullivan finally appreciated that Muldoon was responsible for what was perhaps his greatest victory. Muldoon, too, was probably proudest of his time with Sullivan. He'd done what training gurus aspire to do: He turned a physical wreck into a bronzed ring marvel.

Some fighters seek help that goes beyond the physical. Lou Nova hired yoga masters to help him relax before fights. Ken Norton was known to see a hypnotist to help his confidence. Of course, as Nova and Norton found out, mental guidance isn't much help against the heavy artillery of Joe Louis or George Foreman. Still, the mental part of the game is so taxing that fighters often search for assistance, even if it comes from someone like Uri Geller, the psychic known for using his freaky mental powers to bend spoons.

Geller, who makes ludicrous claims of training Muhammad Ali (he once amused The Greatest with some magic tricks, which isn't exactly training), is occasionally called on by fighters to bend their minds into shape. In January of 2006, Peter McDonagh credited Geller with helping motivate him to a kayo win over Michael Gomez in Ireland. Whether Geller really helps fighters or just enjoys being in their company is as up for speculation as his ability to predict the future. But if Geller's contributions to boxing are suspect, so are those of hypnotist and "lifestyle guru" Tony Quinn, who was recruited in 1995 by Steve Collins prior to Collins' victory over WBO middleweight titlist Chris Eubank.

The Collins-Quinn connection has long been the subject of debate. Some think Collins merely pretended to see Quinn, and that was enough to convince Eubank that Collins had been put in a trance that would make him impervious to pain. A generous quote from Collins appears on Quinn's official website, but at various times the fighter has denied Quinn's ability.

An individual session with Quinn costs over $100,000, and Quinn's detractors have described his organization as "cultish." Quinn's association with Collins ignited his career as a guru, but some are doubtful as to what he actually contributed to Collins' victory. Kevin McBride, however, is a firm believer in hypnosis.

"A lot of athletes use only eight percent of their ability at any given time,"

PHOTO BY STEVE MUNDAY/GETTY IMAGES

Whether or not Steve Collins really consulted a high-priced hypnotist before fighting Chris Eubank in 1995 is still a matter of debate. What's important is that Eubank thought he did, which may have contributed to Collins' victory.

said McBride, who saw a hypnotist prior to his 2005 win over Mike Tyson. "What hypnosis does is send out signals to the subconscious mind that makes you leave nothing behind." But whatever was done for the Tyson fight became undone two fights later when McBride was kayoed by an unheralded heavyweight named Mike Mollo.

"Personally, I don't endorse it," said McBride's trainer, Goody Petronelli. "A fighter has to be himself in the ring. Maybe hypnosis is a good thing. It can help people to stop smoking. I didn't know anything about Kevin doing it. He didn't ask me, he just did it on his own."

McBride used hypnosis to calm his nerves, but Petronelli likes a nervous fighter. "It's better to be nervous than to just sit there, picking your nose." During the Mollo fight, McBride wasn't himself. "He froze out there," said Petronelli. "I'd never seen him do that. He didn't throw punches or nothing. Maybe the hypnosis had a reverse effect."

Petronelli has trained fighters since the 1950s, including Marvelous Marvin Hagler, and he still thinks the old methods are best. "Nutrition? I don't know anything about it," he said. "Just eat three squares a day. Eat a good steak dinner four hours before the fight. I get the guy in tiptop shape, which means doing the roadwork, proper sparring, lots of rest, and no sex. I'd never encourage hypnosis."

Tyson himself was known to use a hypnotist, John Halpin, early in his career. Tyson always seemed a prime target for gurus. When he resumed fighting after his prison stretch, his camp hired Carlos Blackwell, an oversized fitness consultant who vowed to help Tyson reach a level of fitness bordering on "superhuman." Tyson had some success with Blackwell—he lost the weight he'd gained in prison—but it wasn't enough to put Blackwell into the Shilstone category. Blackwell recently founded Mobile Fitness, which means he'll come to your house in a Winnebago to train you. Tyson couldn't achieve super powers, but perhaps you can.

As for Billy Blanks, he probably won't be boxing's next guru. Toney showed up as fat as ever and lost to Peter on points. No worries, though. There's no shortage of overweight celebrities with Blanks' phone number. Goodbye, Toney. Hello, Kirstie Alley. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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[Summary]

Heavyweights

Nicolay Valuev KO 3
Jameel McCline
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Samuel Peter W 12 James Toney
Guillermo Jones KO 1
Jeremy Bates
Francesco Pianeta KO 3
Cerrone Fox
Lou Savarese KO 3 Travis Fulton
Gerald Nobles KO 1 Andy Sample
Cedric Boswell KO 1
Robert Kooser
Vladimir Virchis KO 3
Marcus McGee
Kelvin Davis W 8 Willie Chapman
Mario Preskar W 8 Paolo Ferrara
Donnell Holmes W 8
Harold Sconiers

Cruiserweights

Marco Huck W 12 Ismail Abdoul
Kai Kauramaki W 10
Andrzej Butowicz
Troy Ross KO 3 Hastings Rasani
Mauro Ordiales KO 1
Orlando Farias
Rudolf Kraj KO 8
Cesar David Crenz

Light Heavyweights

Danny Green KO 2 Paul Murdoch
Tamas Popovics W 12
Laszlo Papp
Thomas Ulrich KO 10
Rachid Kanfouah
George Blades KO 7 John William

Super Middleweights

Rubin Williams D 12
Antwun Echols
Anthony Hanshaw D 12
Jean Paul Mendy
Jozsef Nagy W 10
Bernard Donfack
Kai Kauramaki W 10
Andrzej Butowicz
David Medina KO 2 Mike McGuire
Damon McCreary KO 1
James North
Karo Murat KO 1 Yves Romainville
Najim Ettouhlali W 8 Sofiane Sebihi
Kris Andrews W 8 Brooke Wellby
Juan Carlos Lamberti W 6
Brian Norman

Middleweights

Roman Karmazin KO 4
James Obede Toney
Anthony Bonsante W 10
Matt Vanda
Marco Rubio W 12
Daniel Stanisavljevic
Jesus Gonzales W 10
Marcos Primera
Ronald Hearns KO 1
Daniel Neal
Mary Jo Sanders KO 2
Gina Nicholas

Junior Middleweights

Travis Simms KO 9
Jose Antonio Rivera
(*Regains WBA Title*)
Christophe Canclaux W 12
Jimmy Colas
Karolina Lukasik W 10
Jill Emery
Walter Wright KO 8 Dan Wallace
Attila Kovacs KO 6 Ruben Diaz
Anthony Thompson KO 6
Robert Frazier
Tadashi Yuba KO 4 Keiichi Arai
Teruyoshi Omagari KO 3
Alejandro Garcia

Welterweights

Cornelius Bundrage W 10
Chris Smith
Matthew Hatton KO 7
Frank Houghtaling
Michael Stewart W 8
Sebastien Hamel
Antonio Lauri KO 4
Carlos Schram
Norman Schuster KO 1
Mike Reissmann
Alexis Camacho KO 1
Tyler Ziolkowski

Junior Welterweights

Ricky Hatton W 12
Juan Urango
(*Retains World Title*)
Jose Luis Castillo W 12
Herman Ngoudjo
Junior Witter KO 9
Arturo Morua

PHOTO BY FREDERICK FLORIN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Heavyweight Nicolay Valuev plunges a left into Jameel McCline

Henry Bruseles W 12
Wilfredo Negron
Barry Morrison W 12 Lenny Daws
Randall Bailey KO 2
Harrison Cuello
Damian Frias KO 7
Anthony Woods
Ashley Theophane KO 7
Alan Bosworth
Adrian Mora KO 3 Aaron Drake
Ernesto Gonzalez KO 3
Erick Garduno
Hiroyuki Sakamoto Tech. Win 7
Kanongsuk Sitjapai
Noel Rodriguez W 8
Robert Frankel
Lamont Peterson W 8
Juaquin Gallardo

Lightweights

Almazbek Raiymkulov W 10
Emanuel Augustus
Jose Santa Cruz W 10
Luis Antonio Arceo
Jorge Torres W 10 Javier Gallegos
Glen Masicampo KO 8
Anton Olarte
Jaime Sandoval KO 5
Ken Humpreys
John Murray KO 5 Ben Odamattey
Anthony Peterson KO 4
Juan Garza
Koji Samejima KO 2
Songnarong Kiatsingnoi
Kenji Yoshimura KO 2
Wansak Sithsaithong
Jose Antonio Izquierdo W 8
Nick Casal

Junior Lightweights

Edwin Valero KO 1
Michael Lozada
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Satoshi Hosono KO 6
Mario Garcia
Yusuke Kobori KO 3
Dainoshin Kuma
Wilton Hilario KO 3 Juan Perez
Fernando Saucedo KO 2
Hardy Paredes
Allen Litzau W 6
Elvis Luciano Martinez

Featherweights

Masaki Miya D 10
Ruben Estanislao
Juan Manuel Lopez KO 6
Cuauhtemoc Vargas
Alberto Garza KO 1
Joaquin Vargas
Salvador Sanchez KO 8
Gilberto Perez
Yoshinori Miyata W 8
Krachana Jockygym

Junior Featherweights

Ricardo Cordoba W 8
Edinson Jimenez
Nobuto Ikehara KO 7
Daoroek Soonkilanoinai
Kenichi Yamaguchi KO 3
Sornram Rajapachaiyapum

Bantamweights

Hidenobu Honda W 10
Kumarnthong Por Pluemkamol
Rolly Matsushita Tech. Win 10
Malcolm Tunacao
Alex Banal KO 9
Terdkiat Jandaeng
Medgoen Singsurat KO 5
Roger Monserto
Miguel Garcia KO 2
Edgar Ibarra
Juan Mercedes W 8
Kevin Hudgins
Nobuyuki Matsumoto W 8
Sairung Suwanasil

Junior Bantamweights

Cristian Mijares KO 10
Katsushige Kawashima
(*Retains WBC Title*)
Rocky Fuentes W 10
Greg Mangan
Yuki Nasu KO 2
Kwangthai Sithsaithong
Chatchai Sasakul KO 4
Roger Berloza

Flyweights

Rexon Flores W 12
Wisan Sor Suchanya
Luis Alberto Lazarte W 10
Alberto Rossel
Regina Halmich W 10
Reka Krempf
Shingo Yamaguchi W 10
Junichi Ebisuoka
Simona Galassi D 10
Nadia Hockmi
Tomonobu Shimizu W 10
Fahpetchnoi Sor
Chitpattana
Draian Francisco KO 7
Pichitchok Singmanassak
Panomroonglek
Kratingdaenggym KO 6
Richie Mepranum
Luis Maldonado KO 5
Antonio Garibay
Hayate Akihiro KO 4 Petch
Sakrungruang

Junior Flyweights

Milan Melindo W 10 Fabio Marfa

Strawweights

Pigmy Muangchaiyaphum W 12
Pit Anacaya

PHOTO BY PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Junior welterweight Junior Witter battles Arturo Morua

Travis Simms KO 9 Jose Antonio Rivera

Hollywood, Florida: Boxing politics and injury kept Simms out of the ring for 27 months in the prime of his career. Rivera probably wishes they could have kept Simms grounded a little longer. Showing no signs of rust whatsoever, Simms dominated Rivera at the Seminole Hard Rock to reclaim the WBA super welterweight strap that he had never lost in the ring, ending Rivera's title reign in his first defense.

With all of the WBA's "super" titles, "interim" titles, and "champion-in-recess" nonsense, it's not really worth going into how Simms was stripped of the title and how Rivera came to possess it. What's important is that this was a quality matchup between two legitimate 154-pound contenders. And as it turned out, one proved to be far more legitimate than the other.

Southpaw Simms, 153¾, Norwalk, Connecticut, was too slick and precise for the wider-punching Rivera, 153, Worcester, Massachusetts, right from the start. In the first round, Simms' straight left hand couldn't miss, whereas Rivera was coming up short with nearly all of his punches. Early in the second round, Simms, 35, hurt Rivera with a beautiful straight left hand, and though Rivera hit the canvas a moment later, referee Frank Santore Jr. (USA) ruled it to have been a push. Simms pounced on Rivera and soon had his nose gushing blood, and the beltholder fell into the ropes, which Santore did deem to be a knockdown.

Rivera, 33, survived the round, but between Simms' speed and skill and the distraction of his own bloody nose, he was as good as beaten. Over the next several frames, Simms kept scoring with sharp punches, primarily using his straight left, while Rivera couldn't get any real business done. A sizzling right uppercut by Simms highlighted round seven, and in the eighth, Simms was landing nearly everything he threw, demonstrating how to box without a single wasted motion.

For the first half of the ninth round, Rivera was outworking Simms, but any chance he had of earning a point was quickly erased when a pair of left hands hurt Rivera and sent him toppling to the floor. Rivera, 38-5-1 (24), got up at the count of nine, and Simms greeted him with a left to the body, a two-fisted barrage to the face, and finally a nice left hand, convincing the ref to call the bout off at the 2:00 mark.

"I stayed in the gym, stayed diligent, stayed focused," said Simms, 25-0 (19), "and look how it turned out." Simms proceeded to call out the Oscar De La Hoya-Floyd Mayweather winner—a wholly unrealistic possibility—and Cory Spinks, a decidedly more reasonable fight to pursue. Whatever he does next, hopefully it will happen in less than 27 months' time.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoters: **Duva Boxing, Goossen-Tutor Promotions, Don King Productions**
(1-6-07)

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Rivera beat referee Santore's count, but was stopped soon after

Oleg Maskaev W 12 Peter Okhello

Moscow, Russia: There are easy first title defenses, and then there are *easy* first title defenses. Fresh off his upset kayo of Hasim Rahman last August to claim the WBC heavyweight belt, Maskaev brought his belt back to the vicinity of his homeland (he's originally from Kazakhstan) and took on completely undeserving Japan-based Ugandan Okhello. There were no surprises, as the limited Okhello lost every round and never threatened Maskaev. The

bout held at Olympiysky Sports Arena marked the first ever "major" title fight held in Russia.

Maskaev, 240, Staten Island, New York, isn't used to being the faster-handed fighter, but against Okhello, 254½, Nagoya, Japan, he was. "The Big O" dictated the pace with his jab, landed his trademark right hand almost whenever he wanted to, and consistently backed up the 34-year-old challenger. Late in the fourth round, Maskaev put Okhello on the canvas for a brief count.

As Maskaev, 37, continued to pile up the points, the only question became whether or not the fight would go the 12-round distance. Okhello, just two fights removed from a decision loss to Sinan Samil Sam (he "earned" the title shot in his next fight by beating clubfighter Bob Mirovic), is a tough guy to knock out, but Maskaev looked like he might end it in the 10th. He pounded Okhello along the ropes, landing short, blunt blows, and the sellout crowd of approximately 10,000 raised the decibel level in anticipation of a stoppage. But Okhello, 18-5 (16), lasted the round, and Maskaev never came very close again to finishing him off.

PHOTO BY DIMA TAYEV/EPSILON/GETTY IMAGES

Maskaev come over the top of Okhello's guard with a right to the head

Judges Evgueni Gorstkov (Russia) and Bob Logist (Belgium) both had it 120-107 for Maskaev, while Ken

[The Ring Fighter of the Month]

Presented by EVERLAST

Sam Peter

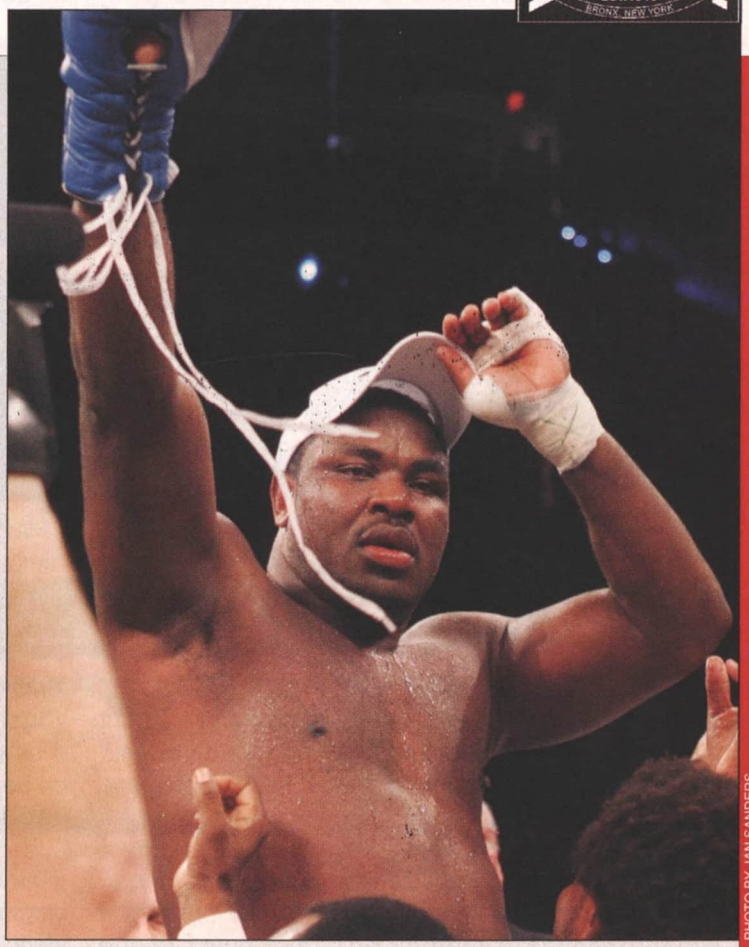
PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Evander Holyfield couldn't do it. John Ruiz couldn't do it. Hasim Rahman couldn't do it. Several of the best heavyweights of recent years have tried to defeat James Toney. But only one of them has: Sam Peter, who has now defeated Toney twice, doing so for a second time in January and hanging on Toney his most one-sided loss since his famous drubbing at the hands of Roy Jones in 1994.

Peter also became the first to put Toney on the canvas since Jones, pulling it off with a heavy jab in the second round. That jab was key throughout the fight, as Peter dictated the distance and the terms, and also showed improvement in terms of bodypunching and employing uppercuts. He not only overpowered the smaller man, but outboxed him as well. Maybe Toney's getting old, maybe he hasn't trained properly for a fight in several years, but just the same, there are not many heavyweights that can beat him by 119-108 and 118-110 scores.

We never thought we'd say it, but Peter is showing signs of turning into a complete fighter. He isn't quite there yet. But a lopsided win over a future Hall of Famer like Toney is a darned fine indicator of progress.

Morita (Japan) scored it 118-109. The referee was Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico).

"I expected the fight to be long," Maskaev, 34-5 (26), acknowledged. "Peter Okhello was tough. I tested him several times, knocked him down, but he withstood it."

Promoter: **Hrunov Vlad**
(12-10-06)

Edwin Valero KO 1 Michael Lozada

Tokyo, Japan: Sensational knockout artist Valero, 130, made his first defense of the WBA 130-pound belt in spectacular fashion, as he collected another victim to run his record to 21-0 (21) by annihilating Mexican Lozada, 129½, in just 72 seconds at the Ariake Coliseum.

Valero, a Japan-based Venezuelan, was simply too strong and too fast for the 23-year-old challenger. Valero started cautiously and quickly felt out the still-nervous opponent. At about 1:00 of the round, the sturdy southpaw titlist landed a quick, strong right-left combination on the button, and down went Lozada. Wobbling, Lozada stood up and resumed fighting. But it was only a matter of time until Valero, who has ended all but two of his bouts in the first round, would finish him. Valero accelerated his attack and battered him with accurate combinations to the face. Lozada went down again, and referee Rafael Ramos (USA) wisely declared a halt to save him from further punishment.

Valero, 25, jubilantly said in the ring, "The challenger is young and he was willing to mix it up. I had no intention to finish him in the opening round, but my punches caught him right and it was over."

The crestfallen loser Lozada, 22-4-1- (15), said in the dressing room, "I couldn't see his punch that dropped me. I don't remember anything. Valero was too fast and strong."

Valero's promoter, Akihiko Honda, is planning his next defense for Japan in May. The question is whether he can find a challenger tough enough to get Valero some rounds.

Promoter: **Teiken Promotions**
(1-3-07)
Joe Koizumi

Cristian Mijares KO 10 Katsushige Kawashima

Tokyo, Japan: In a rematch to a fight Mijares won by split decision 3½ months earlier to claim the WBC "interim" super fly belt, the Mexican southpaw won again, this time retaining the "full" WBC title that became his when Masamori Tokuyama announced his move up in weight. Mijares was aggressive from the outset, withstood the retaliations of Kawashima in the middle rounds, and finally halted him with a flurry of punches at 1:05 of the 10th round at the Ariake Coliseum. Referee Mike Ortega (USA) made a well-received stoppage as Mijares pinned Kawashima in the corner, battering his helpless foe from all angles. It was a very impressive victory for Mijares.

Mijares, 115, seven years Kawashima's junior at 25, was remarkably sharp and aggressive from the start, throwing many southpaw jabs and quick combinations to have the Japanese challenger on the defensive for the first two rounds. But Kawashima, 115, took command in round

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lozada crumbles under Valero's first-round assault

three, when Mijares foolishly mixed it up toe-to-toe with the shorter, harder-punching challenger. In the fourth, Mijares let loose a barrage of punches into the tight defense of Kawashima, who only threw a shot at a time with inferior precision. After the fourth, the WBC's open scoring showed tallies of 39-37 twice and 40-36, all for Mijares. The Mexican also dominated the fifth.

Busily weaving and ducking, Kawashima got close to the taller southpaw in the sixth and landed good right leads and left hooks to take a point. Mijares looked like he was running out of gas, but in the seventh he showed he still had his legs, as he began to move to-and-fro quickly to frustrate Kawashima.

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Mexico's Mijares flattens Kawashima's face with a flush right

The eighth was a difficult round to score, as Mijares threw many light combinations and Kawashima landed good right leads and left hooks. After the eighth, the scores were announced to be 77-75 and 79-73 for Mijares, and 76-76. Should Kawashima have swept the last four rounds, he could have won. But it didn't happen. The ninth saw the Japanese fighter slowing down due to his absorption of punishment. They mixed it up, but Mijares clearly outclassed and outpunched the fading former beltholder.

The 10th round was conclusive and dramatic. Mijares began by throwing a fusillade of punches at the peek-a-boo stylist. When Kawashima was about to retaliate with big punches, Mijares caught him with a well-timed southpaw right hook, flooring him. However, it occurred in the third man's blind spot, so ref Ortega called it slip. Regardless, Kawashima's legs were gone. Mijares went all-out for the finish, forcing Kawashima to the corner to batter him with unanswered combinations. Ortega was patiently watching the one-sided rallies, and finally declared a halt. Kawashima, 30-6 (20), then almost collapsed as Ortega firmly held him, and his cornermen rushed in to rescue him from going down.

Mijares, 30-3-2 (11), said, "Kawashima was a brave warrior, but I was in good condition mentally and physically, so I was confident to win convincingly to bring back the belt to Mexico."

Mijares will now be mandated to face compatriot Jorge "Travieso" Arce. If he can fight this well again, he may be able to defeat the popular, and presumably favored, Arce.

Promoter: **Ohashi Promotions**
(1-3-07)
Joe Koizumi

Muhammad Rachman KO 7
Benjie Sorolla

Jakarta, Indonesia: Most strawweight fighters celebrate their 35th birthdays by looking back fondly on a career that ended several years earlier. IBF minimumweight beltholder Rachman celebrated his by making the third defense of his title, knocking out Filipino journeyman Sorolla, a limited opponent whom Rachman had already beaten by 10-round decision in November 2002.

After a special prefight celebration at Bung Kamo Indoor Tennis Stadium that saw local hero Rachman blow out the candles on his birthday cake and enjoy a standing ovation from the crowd, Sorolla actually got off to a surprisingly good start in the fight. The first round was a fairly even battle of jabs, but in the second, Sorolla, 104¾, started applying pressure, taking the round with a long left hook early and a three-punch salvo late. The fighters exchanged heavy

blows to open the third, with Rachman, 105, Blitar, Indonesia, probably eking out the round with a nice right hand to the head in the final minute.

Starting with round four, Rachman turned the fight into the expected rout. "The Rock Breaker" rocked Sorolla, 25, with a perfect left hook, and emphasized his dominance with two nice right hands late in the round. Alternating between counterpunching and taking the lead, Rachman boxed beautifully in the fifth, and he claimed the sixth by connecting with a well-timed counter right uppercut just before the bell. Sorolla opened the seventh with some decent bodywork, but there would be no time for those rib-benders to really take effect, and Rachman finished the challenger off mere moments later. Two headshots dazed Sorolla, 21-11-3 (6), and Rachman pounced, cornering his foe. He unloaded 11 consecutive punches, enough to convince referee John Wright (Australia) to call a halt at 2:10 of the round.

"I'm aged, but I'm not faded!" declared the triumphant Rachman, 61-5-5 (31). After an easy match like this, there's talk that Rachman may take on the division's ultimate challenge next, an alphabet unification against undefeated slickster Ivan Calderon.

Promoter: **Suryo Goeritno**

(12-23-06)

Mariano Carrera KO II Javier Castillejo

Berlin, Germany: An 11th-round stoppage, which prompted Ricardo Sanchez Atocha, the trainer of Castillejo, to charge Panamanian referee Guillermo Perez until security men restrained him, was just the beginning of this controversy. Carrera, 1591/2, Cordoba, Argentina, was ahead by one point on two scorecards when Castillejo, 1591/2, Madrid, Spain, succumbed to a brutal barrage of punches to yield the WBA middleweight title to the Argentine. Four weeks later, Carrera tested positive for the banned substance clenbuterol and was immediately stripped of the belt, leaving an air of uncertainty around both fighters.

Carrera's agent, Mario Margossian, denied that his fighter had knowingly used any performance-enhancing drug. Clenbuterol is a steroid that assists in increasing muscle mass, reducing weight, and improving breathing. In the ring he said he had "100 people to thank and I love all of them" before he "dedicated the title to Mona Giminez," a Cordoban provincial singer, but the positive result for the drug test that followed puts a major question mark against Carrera's achievement and career. Whether Castillejo, a former 154-pound titleholder, would be re-installed as the WBA's 160-pound titleholder remained unclear but, at 38, there were clear signs against Carrera, 30-4 (21), that he is a fading force.

Castillejo, 61-7 (41), was a heavy 5-1 favorite in the betting, having gone the distance with such luminaries as Oscar De La Hoya in 2001 and Fernando Vargas before he shocked the highly regarded German Felix Sturm to win the WBA belt last year. But from early in the bout, the 26-year-old challenger, who had never before fought outside of Argentina, was allowed by his veteran opponent to impose himself, and in the fourth round he staggered the Spaniard with a heavy assault. Castillejo also suffered a one-point deduction for low blows.

Unsurprisingly, he refused to go down without a fight, and the toe-to-toe exchanges that followed stirred the crowd of 3,500 inside the Estrel Convention Centre to sustained applause for both men's efforts. Castillejo was stunned again in round nine and had a further point deducted from his total in the 10th, again for low blows. Going into the penultimate round, he led 96-93 on one judge's card but trailed

PHOTO BY AXEL SCHMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Carrera's TKO of Castillo for the WBA belt was overshadowed by allegations of illegal doping

95-94 on the other two. The cards became immaterial, however, when Carrera hurt Castillejo with a right hand before landing 26 unanswered punches and compelling Perez to make his intervention at the 1:53 mark. Atocha took exception to his decision, however, and his actions were entirely inappropriate, though Castillejo and his camp insisted he was not badly shaken when the stoppage occurred. The real shame, however, was what transpired weeks later. Boxing is a dangerous enough sport without drugs being part of the equation.

Promoter: **Wilfried Sauerland**
(12-2-06)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY KAZUHIRO NOGI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kameda changed his style and beat Landaeta convincingly

Joan Guzman W 12 Antonio Davis

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic: Campaigning in a division that features Manny Pacquiao, Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and now Juan Manuel Marquez, it's easy for a superbly talented fighter like Guzman to get pushed to the back of people's minds. And unfortunately for him, defenses of the WBO belt against anonymous challengers like Davis in fights that are broadcast only over the Internet (this was a pay-per-view on Maxboxing.com) will do little to move him closer to the forefront. Just the same, Guzman was his usual flashy self in this fight in front of more than 11,000 fans at the Palacio Virgilio Travieso Soto, and he won with ease, which, we suppose, is better than looking bad and losing on a grander stage.

Guzman, 130, Brooklyn, New York, via Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, got off to an excellent start, hinting at a possible short night by wobbling Davis, 130, Atlanta, Georgia, in the opening round with a two-fisted assault, the highlights coming in the form of bolo-style uppercuts. But the 30-year-old beltholder, making his first defense since defeating Jorge Barrios for the strap last September, couldn't put Davis, 34, away. In fact, after surviving that first round, Davis frequently went on to force the action and back Guzman up. The problem was, it was always Guzman landing the most eye-catching and effective punches.

Davis was rated fifth by the WBO despite never beating a noteworthy opponent, and his two previous losses came against the only two decent names on his ledger, Edner Cherry and Koba Gogoladze. At times, Guzman fought down to the level of his challenger, throwing single shots and neglecting his jab. But he also had some shining moments, such as when he launched a body barrage in round eight and when he showed spectacular defense in making Davis, 22-3 (11), miss repeatedly in the 10th. He also picked up an extra point in round eight when referee Joe Cortez (USA) penalized Davis for using his elbows.

Aside from the brief flirtation with a kayo in round one, however, Guzman never came close to finishing off Davis, leaving the judges to make the easy call. Tom Miller (USA) and Horacio Bakemon (Dominican Republic) both had it 119-108, and Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) saw it 118-109, all for Guzman, 27-0 (17).

Promoter: **Jay Boxing Promotions**
(12-18-06)

Koki Kameda W 12 Juan Jose Landaeta

Tokyo, Japan: After winning a highly controversial split decision over Landaeta in August to claim the WBA light flyweight title, unbeaten Kameda, 107¾, Tokyo, Japan, won more convincingly the second time around. In his first defense of the belt, the southpaw Kameda took a unanimous decision over fellow lefty Landaeta, 108, Turmero, Venezuela, by circling, countering with solid overhand lefts, and piling up points steadily at the Ariake Coliseum.

Judge Stanley Christodoulou (South Africa) scored it 116-111, Terry O'Connor (England) had it 115-113, and Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) had it 119-108, all in favor of Kameda. It might seem strange that one judge gave all 12 rounds to Kameda (with a one-point penalty), while

another judge had him winning by only two points. But either view is understandable. Landaeta seldom landed any telling blows, while Kameda kept circling to avoid most of the punches and occasionally scored with a few left crosses. Had you favored the fighter landing a low number of solid shots, every round might have gone to Kameda. If you favored less accurate but more frequent punches, you could find several rounds to give to Landaeta.

Kameda changed his style from peek-a-boo to hit-and-run in this clash, and looked like a young Floyd Mayweather, fully utilizing his superior speed of hand and foot. The 20-year-old simply moved and punched too fast, and Landaeta, 28, was victimized by counters as he tried to apply pressure. Clearly, Kameda studied the highly disputed first fight against Landaeta and changed his style to beat Landaeta with his speed.

For the first four rounds, Kameda appeared content to keep moving around like young Cassius Clay and occasionally displayed an Ali shuffle. Landaeta threw southpaw jabs and combinations, none of which could catch the elusive target. Kameda threw only a few right hooks and straight lefts, but they were precise.

In the fifth, Kameda became more aggressive. He easily connected with good counters to the monotonously onrushing Venezuelan. Landaeta looked bewildered and surprised by Kameda's quite different way of fighting from their first fight. Occasionally rotating his arm like a windmill or provoking him with a "come on" gesture, Kameda actually toyed with his foe and was in command in the fifth through eighth sessions.

In round nine, encouraged by his cornermen, Rafael Liendo and Manny Siaca, Landaeta desperately moved forward and pinned the fast-moving beltholder to the ropes—failing, however, to score effectively. In round 10, Kameda opened up with a flurry of punches. Landaeta attempted to fight back with busy combos, but only hit air. Kameda's direct lefts without right leads often caught Landaeta to win another point in the 11th.

In the 12th, ref Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) penalized Kameda a point for a headbutt, though it was unclear whether the foul was intentional. Though Kameda failed to respond to the crowd's expectation to see a kayo victory, he showed his talent, quick reflexes, and superior powerpunching right up until the end.

Landaeta, 20-5-1 (16), said, "Kameda changed his style, which surprised me very much. I couldn't land as many punches on him as in the previous bout. I accept the official verdict, but I believed I took some points."

"Though many people said something to criticize my previous performance against Landaeta, I think I clearly won this rematch," declared Kameda, 13-0 (10).

Promoter: **Kyoei Promotions**
(12-20-06)
Joe Koizumi

Edison Miranda KO 1 Willie Gibbs

Miami, Florida: In the main event of a card appropriately dubbed "Season's Beatings," 25-year-old middleweight contender Miranda looked like a star in the making as he destroyed the typically sturdy Gibbs at the Miccosukee Indian Gaming Casino. It was the Miami-based Colombian's first outing since a questionable decision loss to Arthur Abraham in Abraham's native Germany. Apparently, he's suffering no side effects from that September setback.

After feeling out his opponent for the first couple of minutes, Miranda, 161, landed a looping right hook to the head with 45 seconds remaining in the round, then a hard right hook to the body 15 seconds later. As Gibbs, 161, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, moved forward behind a low jab, he walked into a big right hand to the head. The shot spun a dazed Gibbs around and into a corner, where Miranda unleashed 22 unanswered punches. A left to the chin finally dropped Gibbs, who got to his knees but was still too woozy to beat American referee Tommy Kimmons' count, giving Miranda a kayo at the 2:59 mark of the first.

"I was preparing for him to throw his right," Miranda, 27-1 (24), said, "and it turned out that I was the one who finished him with a right."

In the days that followed, the 31-year-old Gibbs, 20-2 (16), claimed through promoter Rich Cappiello that he twisted his knee when Miranda spun him with the right hand. "Willie was completely coherent, and more than able to continue," Cappiello said. "Immediately after the fight, he told me that he hurt his knee, and when he initially tried to get up, it buckled, thus preventing him from beating the count."

"I'm disappointed by the reaction of Gibbs' team to their defeat," Miranda responded in a press release. "I was told Philadelphia fighters always come to fight and that win or lose, they have no excuses. Well, this obviously isn't the case. The only things that knocked Gibbs out were my fists, and I don't remember hitting him on the knee."

Not surprisingly, Miranda promoter Warriors Boxing called out Abraham and middleweight champ Jermain Taylor after the eye-popping win. "I just train hard and prepare for whomever my team wants me to fight next," Miranda said. "But it was sweet to send out a strong message like I did tonight."

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Main Events**
(12-16-06)

Jose Hernandez KO 8
Jason Litzau

Miami, Florida: Way behind on the cards, the unheralded Hernandez broke through with a dazzling one-punch knockout of featherweight prospect Litzau in a stunning upset at the Miccosukee Indian Gaming Casino. It was a classic case of success breeding failure, as Litzau was in such control that he got sloppy and gave the determined Hernandez just the opening he needed.

Not only was the ending great for the 30-year-old Hernandez, 127½, but the start was pretty spectacular for him too. Late in the first round, he landed a right uppercut through Litzau's guard, then backed up to deliver a pretty straight right to the chin from an angle that dropped the offensive-minded Minnesota native. Litzau, 128, beat the count of ref Frank Santore Jr. (USA), but barely survived the final 25 seconds of the round as Hernandez tried to bring a quick end to the scheduled 10-rounder.

PHOTO BY JAVIEL CENTENO/FIGHTWIREIMAGES.COM

Hernandez came from behind to shock Litzau

Litzau began to assert himself in the second, though he ignored the advice of his corner and continued to trade with the strong-chinned Hernandez. Despite leaving himself open to the Mexico-born Chicago resident's shots, Litzau got the better of the exchanges and won rounds two through seven on all three judges' cards.

Litzau's bravado proved costly as the fight took a sudden turn with 17 seconds remaining in the eighth round. Hernandez fired a sweeping right hook to the jaw over a low, lazy left, putting Litzau on his back. In a haze, Litzau stumbled in an attempt to get to his feet, but Santore counted him out at the 2:52 mark of the round, much to the delight of the largely pro-Hernandez crowd.

It was a major setback for the 23-year-old Litzau, 20-1 (18),who led 68-64 on all three cards. He'd began to emerge in 2006 as a potential star with three ESPN2-televised knockouts. It was also another setback for promoter Main Events. The company had a dismal year as Arturo Gatti, Fernando Vargas, Calvin Brock, and Joel Julio also lost big fights, while Juan Diaz, Rocky Juarez, and vice president Carl Moretti all jumped ship.

For Hernandez, 22-3 (14), the come-from-behind kayo was a breakthrough after several frustrating setbacks. He dropped a close unanimous decision to Antonio Escalante in a brutal war in January '06. His other two losses came in 1998, when he was on the short end of a six-round majority decision and a six-round split decision.

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **Main Events**
(12-16-06)

Anthony Hanshaw D 12
Jean Paul Mendy

South Haven, Mississippi: The final match of the eight-man *ShoBox* super middleweight tournament will probably not be the final match after all, as it ended in an inconclusive draw, setting up a probable rematch in the near future. At least it confirmed that Mendy, the French southpaw who blew through his quarterfinal and semifinal fights with ease, and Hanshaw, the talented American prospect who also had little difficulty in his first two assignments, were indeed the two best fighters in the tournament.

It was not an easy fight to score, but it seemed to THE RING that Hanshaw, 167, Massillon, Ohio, got slightly the better of the action. Certainly, he got off to the better start. The lefty-vs.-righty matchup made for some awkward action at times, but the clean punching was being done by the 28-year-old Hanshaw, who twice in the first round knocked Mendy, 167, Paris, France, backward with right

hands. Hanshaw did a good job of smothering the Frenchman's attack over the next couple of rounds, and it wasn't until the fourth that Mendy, 33, really began to get untracked, landing a right uppercut that wobbled Hanshaw momentarily.

The sixth was a big round for Hanshaw, as he scored with effective powershots throughout the round, most notably with two left hooks to the jaw with about 20 seconds to go. Round seven featured several good exchanges, and though Hanshaw got the better of most of them, Mendy probably stole the round with a left hand near the bell that shook the American.

Hanshaw had a particularly good 10th round, and appeared to be pulling away, but the last two stanzas belonged to Mendy, who proved more energetic down the stretch. Early in the 11th, a clash of heads opened up a cut over Hanshaw's right eye, and for the entire three minutes, Mendy was the one making the fight. The Frenchman scored with a good left cross before the bell, and rode the momentum into the final round, when the gash over Hanshaw's eye got considerably worse, warranting a close look from the ringside doctor. After that, both fighters opened up, with first Mendy, 23-0-1 (12), knocking Hanshaw off-balance, then Hanshaw, 21-0-1 (14), getting Mendy in trouble along the ropes with a huge right-left combo, and then Mendy again taking over at the finish.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Chi is ecstatic after regaining WBA featherweight title

All three American judges saw a close fight, with slightly different scores. Gerald Demings had it 115-113 for Mendy, Ressia Mullins went 115-113 for Hanshaw, and Gary Ritter had it even at 114-114. THE RING saw it 116-112 for Hanshaw. The referee was Randy Phillips (USA). Both fighters indicated afterward that they'd be interested in rematch, but it may have to wait a while for Hanshaw's cut to heal.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Gary Shaw Productions**
(1-5-07)

Injin Chi W 12 Rodolfo Lopez

Seoul, Korea: Former WBC featherweight titlist Chi, 126, struggled to regain his old belt, but did just barely get it back by outhustling Mexican titleholder "Rudy" Lopez, 125¾, and earning a unanimous decision over 12 hard-fought rounds at Chungmu Art Hall. Going into the final three rounds, the fight was more or less even, but the South Korean rallied to sweep the late stanzas and pull it out.

After Chi lost the WBC strap on an upset split decision to Takashi Koshimoto in January '06, Koshimoto promptly lost it to Lopez in July, and this was the Mexican's first defense. Chi, 10 years Lopez' senior at 33, put pressure on the nervous youngster at the start, scoring with solid combinations throughout the first two rounds. But Lopez turned aggressor and pinned the Korean on the ropes with a flurry of punches in the third. The fourth round saw Chi connect with a strong right cross that staggered Lopez. After the fourth, the open scoring system showed that Chi was ahead 39-37 on one card, and the fight was even at 38-38 on the other two.

In round five, Lopez landed a solid right counter, forcing Chi to the ropes, though Chi averted the beltholder's combos with weaving and ducking. Chi connected with good jabs in the sixth and seventh, putting Lopez on the retreat and earning the rounds. In the eighth, however, Chi looked like he was fading, due perhaps to his struggles making weight. After the eighth, the tallies were 77-75 for Chi (twice) and 76-76.

Lopez, 19-3-1 (13), was in command in the ninth, but Chi, 31-3-1 (18), dominated the last three rounds by showing heart and pride in the face of fatigue. Lou Filippo (USA) had it 116-112, Stephen Blea (USA) saw it 116-113, and Raul Nieves (Puerto Rico) scored 117-111, all in favor of Chi. The referee was Curtis Thrasher (USA), who did a good job of keeping a rough brawl from getting dirty.

Promoter: **Poong San Promotions**
(12-17-06)
Joe Koizumi ■

(Continued from Page 28)

more independent now." But when he first arrived in Oregon, Nguyen was nearly overwhelmed by the culture shock. He couldn't speak a word of English. He was even puzzled by the odd foods. "Eating an apple was very strange to me," Nguyen remembered.

Meanwhile, the Oregon weather was making his family miserable. After just nine months, Nguyen's mother decided to move the clan to Hawaii, where the climate was more to their liking. Nguyen went on to master the English language and graduate with honors from Baldwin High School in 2001.

Along the way, he developed a love for combat sports. Inspired by his older brother Tien Nguyen, an accomplished kickboxer, Dat began taking kickboxing and karate lessons. That led to Marquis of Queensbury-style boxing. In eighth grade, Nguyen won the state Junior Olympic title. He was awarded a scholarship to Northern Michigan, where he fought for United States Olympic Education Center head coach Al Mitchell and built a number-four national ranking at 125 pounds in the USA Boxing points ratings.

Thanks in part to close decision losses at the 2003 U.S. Championships (semis) and the 2004 Eastern Trials (quarters), Nguyen failed to earn a spot in the 2004 Olympic Trials. Fed up with the politics and points systems of the amateur game, and sick of trying to juggle classes and boxing, Nguyen followed Northern Michigan teammate Travis Kauffman back to the super heavyweight's hometown of Reading, Pennsylvania, in the winter of 2003.

Nguyen began training with Kauffman's father, Marshall, who took him to the Eastern Trials and the Pennsylvania Golden Gloves regionals. He turned pro in May 2004, at age 21, with a first-round stoppage of Ernest Scott on the Kermit Cintron-Elio Ortiz undercard in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"I had a lot of people telling me a lot of things," said Nguyen. "My style is more adapted for the pros. The amateur style is hit and run. My style is: I don't care if I get hit; I want to knock you out. So I wanted to turn pro. I was tired of fighting for free. I felt everything was working against me in the amateurs."

Nguyen realized quickly that he didn't want to remain in Reading, a beaten-down industrial city annually ranked in the top-25 nationally in per capita murder. He didn't sign a managerial contract with Marshall Kauffman for fear of being stuck there. The lack of a manager led to him having to work the nightshift at a battery factory. He was soon living on cups of noodles and spending less and less time in the gym.

"He got distracted being here in Reading because of girlfriend issues and other issues," said Marshall Kauffman, who still keeps in touch with the fighter. "After a while, Dat realized he had to get out of Reading. He almost got into a depression stage here."

More than seven months after pitching a four-round shutout against Othoniel Espinosa on the Arturo Gatti-Leo Dorin undercard in July of 2004, Nguyen fought for the last time in Reading. With only a week-and-a-half of training, he barely beat James Hope, who was making his pro debut.

"I just won the fight by natural talent instead of my skills," he said. "That was the hardest time of my life. It was hurting me inside. I was working at night, and during the day I'd be sleeping. It was hard for me to train. Being around there was deteriorating me slowly. I was just getting disappointed about everything."

His mother came to his rescue. In August 2005, she sent her son money for a plane ticket back to Hawaii, where Nguyen spent the fall taking courses at Maui Community College. He said he got his real-estate license just as the housing market in Hawaii took a tumble.

All along, though, he longed to put on the gloves and give boxing one more shot. "I've got all this talent," Nguyen said. "It was killing me inside to see all my friends fighting on ESPN, guys I used to fight in amateurs."

In January '06, he moved to Orange County, California, and appeared a couple of times at Freddie Roach's gym. Nguyen, who lived with a monk in a Buddhist temple, immediately ran into some of the same time and money struggles he had endured in Reading.

Nguyen's big break came in February, when a friend got him a plane ticket to Florida so he could spar with Danny McDermott, one of McGirt's fighters at the time. McGirt, who remembered Nguyen from sparring sessions he had with Gatti in January of 2005, introduced the hungry fighter to the 71-year-old Luce, who was looking to get back into the sport. When Luce offered Nguyen a contract, Nguyen quickly flew back to California, packed his bags, and drove two days back to Florida.

"He's just one of the finest young men that I've ever met in my life," Luce said. "His mother taught him well. He's very respectful, but he's nasty in the ring. Dat is a devastating body-puncher. That's the thing that makes him so exciting. He's into working the body and getting the hands down, and the second they come down, he's all over you like a bad dream."

Cappiello had Nguyen scheduled for an ESPN2 *Friday Night Fights* undercard January 26 and a Telefutura undercard February 23. He wants to get him to 12-0 by July and have him fighting for minor belts by the end of the year before challenging for major titles in 2008.

In the meantime, McGirt wants to get Nguyen to be more patient and not slap with his punches, both side effects from his long amateur career. McGirt jokes that the biggest thing the 24-year-old has to work on is getting to the gym on time. "It's like he's 94, the way he gets out of bed sometimes," McGirt said with a laugh. "The only way he can be on time is at night.

"He's a great kid to work with. He's like most fighters, he gets stubborn at time. But he listens and he works hard."

Nguyen has always wanted to be "something special" to represent his people and their struggles. Now, after years of searching, he feels he's finally in a position to take that stab at greatness.

"Right now," he said, "I have everything that I need." ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

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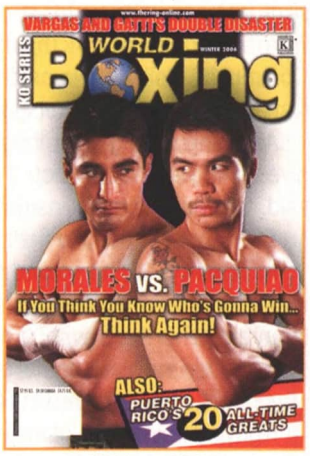

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By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

Back To The Beginning

The potentially harmful effects of boxing are magnified when it comes to children and adolescents. Head injuries, fighters competing in inappropriate weight classes, and dehydration do not suddenly appear when a fighter turns professional. If we want to help boxers have a successful healthy career, we need to address the problems where they begin—in the amateurs.

Amateur boxing is a wonderful endeavor, but coaching and overseeing fighters is a grave responsibility that should never be underestimated.

"The easiest thing for a coach to do is put gloves on his fighters and just put them in the ring," said Terry Nye, coach, promoter, and owner of Nye's Gym in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "Fighters need to cross train. You can't just allow them to spar all the time and get beat up. You have to constantly assess their reactions. If you allow them to spar too often, your kids are being abused."

Unlike many of today's trainers, 57-year-old Nye works out daily with his fighters.

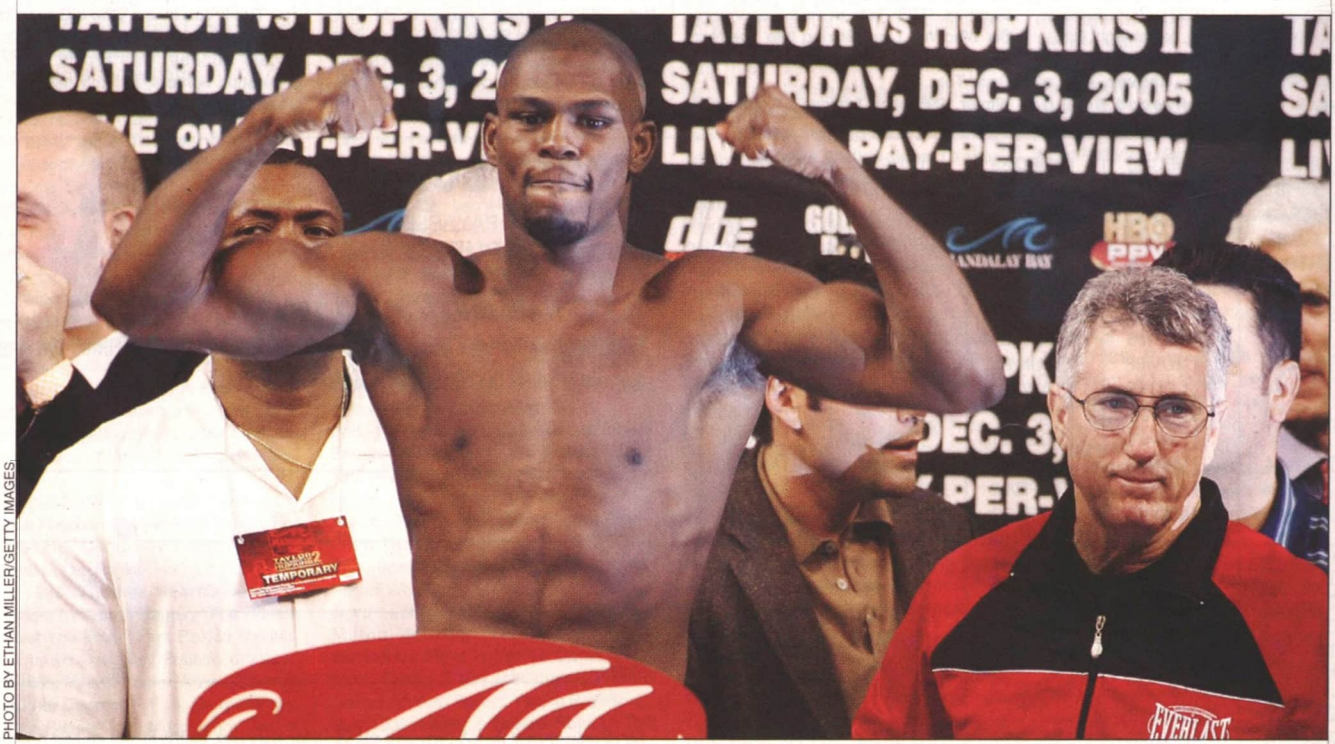
"Today, fighters are smarter, and they want to know why they should listen to you," he said. "They expect someone to practice what they preach."

Nye also believes that many so-called trainers don't have the personal or professional qualifications to safely instruct fighters. Until recently seconds were not required to undergo background checks before working ringside with young athletes. Anyone can call themselves a coach, and parents without the time or concern are often too willing to hand over their children to someone with an undocumented title.

"Too many are video coaches," noted trainer and Olympic boxing coach Pat Burns. "They purchase a video on how to train a fighter and they start training. After two years, they believe themselves to be smarter than anyone in the business. The key for any trainer is to always know how much you still need to learn."

Rapid and significant weight loss affects every athlete's performance, and when you couple that with a sport like boxing, the dangers increase tenfold. Burns notes, "It never made much sense to deplete yourself of all your strength and then go fight. When I was young and knew I was going to have a streetfight, I wanted to give myself an edge. That meant eating well and keeping hydrated. With my boxers, I use the example of a dry sponge. If you take a dry sponge and squeeze it hard, it is brittle and useless. Get it wet and it will stretch and become elastic. Deplete your body, you lose speed and ability."

First and foremost on the mind of all trainers is determining the appropriate weight class for a fighter. Nye and his wife, Karen, a registered dietician, will work with each fighter



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Pat Burns (on the right, wearing eye glasses) believes Taylor should be fighting at 168 pounds

on what they eat and the amount of calories they need. They try to keep their fighters' body fat between 9 and 10 percent.

In 2001, Great Britain's Brunel University studied the effects of weight loss on mood and performance among amateur boxers. The study included 16 amateur boxers, average age 23½, average experience five years, ranging in weight from flyweight to heavyweight (super heavyweight boxers were excluded). The mood profile assessed anger, depression, fatigue, tension, confusion, and alertness. Boxers reduced their weight an average five percent. The fighters did not necessarily equate winning with a positive performance. Although this study utilized a small number of boxers, it clearly demonstrated that rapid weight loss was associated with a poor performance and a negative mood.

PHOTO BY RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES

There is no evidence that headgear protects a boxer's brain

Nye began working with Kermit Cintron as an amateur at age 19, and weight class was an issue. "Kermit was strongest at 147, but he couldn't make that weight every day, and there was another fighter at that weight who could beat him. So, we moved to 156." Now 27, Cintron is still most comfortable at 147.

Burns does not suggest a weight class when he first begins with a fighter. "I train him, encourage him to eat well and maintain his fluids. I watch him closely, and after a time while he's learning, I begin to monitor his weight."

Burns is a firm believer in allowing a young fighter to grow into his weight.

"I started working with Jermain Taylor at age 21 when he turned professional," said Burns. "Many criticized me for turning him pro at 160 (when he had been competing at 156). He was approaching young adulthood and developing more muscle mass. As he progressed, he has even greater muscles mass and now struggles to make 160, and should move to 168."

Burns illustrates that picking a weight class for a fighter can be a key to victory or defeat. Amateur fighters involved in the Olympic Trials and national tournaments have to weigh in daily during a competition. They may be able to force themselves to reach an unrealistic weight *once*, but it is impossible to maintain day after day and frequently results in disqualification. Burns' two-time lightweight national champion, David Hudson, often beat his competitors by fighting at the correct weight and by maintaining it while other while other fighters were forced to skip meals and do additional roadwork before a fight. He also sites Diego Corrales as an example of a fighter placed in the wrong weight class.

"Diego was a tall kid, fighting at 125," he said. "I advised the other coaches he should be competing at 132 and eventually move up to 140. But too many coaches and professional trainers don't think long term."

Weight is certainly not the only problem. Many coaches ascribe to the philosophy that headgear makes amateur boxing safer than professional competition. There is *no* evidence of this to be the case. To the contrary, headgear can give a boxer a false sense of security and increase the weight on the head when the fighter is hit. Although it will protect against cuts, it offers limited protection to the brain. A 2006 study of 14 Swedish amateur boxers suggested they had higher levels of certain chemicals linked to brain cell injury following a bout. Therefore, it is imperative for coaches to understand that excessive sparring and fighting too often places their fighters at increased risk of brain damage irrespective of the fighter's age.

The responsibility, however, doesn't start with trainers. Parents must take an active role in choosing a boxing gym and coach. They need to evaluate how the gym is run, the attitude of the coaches, who they have trained, and utilize the Internet to do a background search. Moreover, amateur fighters should undergo thorough medical examinations and appropriate testing, because other than a prefight exam, neither the Golden Gloves nor USA Boxing requires routine tests.

Finally, making the assumption that a boxer turning pro is starting with a clean slate is naïve and dangerous. Many times problems take root during a boxer's amateur career and were never addressed. ■

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Why Still Vacant?

I thought that when number-one Manny Pacquiao defeated number-three Erik Morales, Pacquiao would be the RING champion in the junior lightweight division. Perhaps the only way to be champion now is a box-off between the number-one and number-two guys?

JAMES A. VINCENT
JVincentrx@comcast.net

[Editor's note: There are rare instances when a fight between number one and number three will crown a RING champion, but this was not one of them. It looks like we'll have to wait for "Pac-Man" to fight Marco Antonio Barrera again to fill the world title vacancy.]

Good Steward Of The Booth

There's been a lot of talk lately about who'd make the best HBO expert commentator, and I can't see why. Emanuel Steward is still the best at describing the technical aspects of a fight in a way that even a layman can find comprehensible and interesting. This is important because, to the average TV viewer, boxing is only a glorified slugfest. Thus, viewers need to see how boxing is not just about the punch, but an art with different styles and subtle strategies.

I think one of the more important aspects of Steward's commentating is how he describes why the weakest punch in boxing, the jab, is the best punch around. Also, Manny's predictions about the techniques and positioning that a fighter will use to win are almost always right. The only other expert commentator that skilled and consistently accurate is Teddy Atlas. I admire them both, and I hope they keep these guys around a long time.

CAM DOKIS
shkotaymong@hotmail.com

A Real RING Fan

This is my first time contacting you guys, "my heroes," from the world of boxing. It was a dream of my dad and me that I become a pro fighter one day. Growing up poor in a bad neighborhood and being Mexican is surely a great recipe to create a willing fighter. Medical reasons kept me from pursuing boxing, however. I did manage to play high school football, and later join the Marines. I thought about trying to join the Marine Corps boxing team, but never did.

Well, one day I decided to try to learn more about the sport and try to keep up with all the fighters. I figured I'd start by reading THE RING magazine. Starting in 1998, I began buying all your magazines. I can't get enough of all of your articles and photos.

I consider myself a hardcore fight fan, and you've helped me achieve that. I've learned so much about the Sweet Science, from historic bouts to who's who in today's fight game. I commend

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao's rubber match victory over Erik Morales in November cemented his number-one position in THE RING's rankings, but it did not earn him the world championship. In this case, 1 vs. 3 was not enough.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Beating men on the level of Oisin Fagan doesn't prove much to reader Felix Fontenot. He's waiting for Julio Cesar Jr. to take some more challenging opponents ... and he's not expecting much when he does.

you for all your effort in exposing all the fake alphabet gangs and fake world titles. Thank you so much for always keeping it real! Real world champions only wear RING belts!

JAIME CHIMINO SANCHEZ
Bell Gardens, CA

It's Time, Julio

What are you waiting for, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.? It is starting to annoy me that every time I pick up a newspaper or boxing magazine these days, there is an article praising you for knocking out another nobody.

It is time to step to the plate, little man.

Number one, you are not your father. When you step into the ring with a real up-and-coming welterweight like Andre Berto or Paul Williams, or perhaps Antonio Margarito, you will have your ass handed back to you. Perhaps then you will see the light.

What are you waiting for, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.? The whole welterweight division to die of old age? We know you can beat taxi drivers and winos; now it's time to step into the ring with a worthy fighter. If you can win, my hat goes off to you. If you don't, take your ass-whipping like a man.

FELIX FONTENOT
Smith River, CA

Nolo Contender

Regarding the cover story of the 2007 edition of THE RING ("*The Contender:* Changing Boxing ... Reviving Careers"), I'm down with Ivan Goldman ("Digging Deep") 100 percent. THE RING article stated that *The Contender* is changing boxing. You're damn right; it's changing boxing for the worst.

I'm afraid that the *Friday Night Fights* will become a boxing version of *General Hospital.* Instead of a fighter saying he's going to break his opponents ribs, we'll be watching the boxer and his wife weeping and complaining about their misfortunes.

About "changing careers," it depends on the boxer's age and record. How old is *Contender* champion Grady Brewer? I did not bother to read THE RING's *Contender* coverage. If I want heartbreaking stories, I'll read Oprah Winfrey's books.

You have been saying that *The Contender* is brining new fans to the sport. But these "new fans" are being exposed to a new world of boxing, one of special effects and weeping fighters. Consequently, every time they watch a fight, that's what they'll expect.

THE RING shouldn't be wasting that much ink, paper, and money covering *The Weeping Contender.* I'm with Goldman. Let's keep our beloved sport as it is: raw, sometimes brutal, but first and foremost, beautiful.

ISAIAS CORTEZ
Marcy, NY

Manfredo's Golden Opportunity

Although interest in boxing isn't what it should be, being from southeastern Massachusetts (very close to Providence, Rhode Island), the legacy of greats like Marciano, Hagler, and Pazienza still remains strong. With that being said, it is great to see Peter Manfredo Jr. getting a shot at a big-time fighter like Joe Calzaghe. Aside from what I had read, I knew little about Calzaghe and his impressive career until he dismantled Jeff Lacy and beat up Sakio Bika. He is undoubtedly a supremely skilled fighter with above-average power. At this point, I don't know if the same can be said for Manfredo Jr., but in boxing, as we have all seen, all a fighter needs is a chance.

Well, Manfredo Jr. will get his chance to become a well-recognized fighter for something other than appearing on a reality show. This fight means a shot at legitimacy and a world title, something very few ever get a chance to fight for. I will be pulling for Peter Manfredo Jr., though I think he may be outclassed. However, if he can pull off a victory, we will have another name to add to the list of local champions.

PHIL SANTOS
Taunton, MA ■

[Looking Ahead]

By Joe Santoliquito

Five Years Isn't Too Late For Casamayor

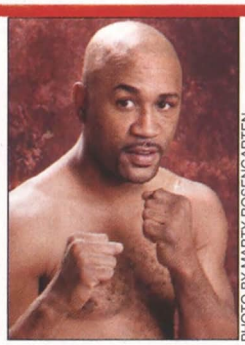


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Casamayor wants Freitas again

It's a loss that's been grating on lightweight world champion **Joel Casamayor** for five years now. Finally, on April 28, Casamayor will get a chance to do something about it.

Casamayor's defeat at the hands of Brazilian powerpuncher **Acelino Freitas** for the WBA super featherweight title on January 12, 2002, never set well with him. Though the decision was unanimous, Casamayor was convinced that it went the wrong way. He always felt he would get a chance to avenge the loss and was surprised, along with the rest of us, when the 31-year-old Freitas retired after a shaky victory over **Zahir Raheem** last April.

But now "Popo" has un-retired and the details of location and network for the rematch were being worked out at press time.

"We have everything together between Freitas' people and us, we're 100 percent together on doing the fight," said **Luis DeCubas Jr.**, Casamayor's manager with Santa Barbara Management. "Joel lost to Freitas the first time, but Joel thought he won. There was a slip and penalty, but five years later, we're going to get him. We're going to walk him down and we're going to stop him."

A TV deal has not been secured for the fight, but both DeCubas and Freitas' promoter, **Artie Pelullo**, are hopeful HBO will buy it. The venue was also be up in the air in mid-January.

Pelullo wanted to hold the fight in Brazil, where he hoped to pack 40,000 into a soccer stadium, but, he said, "Casamayor has categorically refused to go to Brazil."

Not so, said DeCubas Jr.

"The money has to be right," DeCubas Jr. said. "We feel we can stop Freitas. That's why we're not afraid to go to Brazil and fight in front of 40,000 screaming Brazilians."

This will be a different version of Casamayor, 34-3-1 (21), than the first time he met Freitas, 38-1, (32), DeCubas Jr. vowed. What really gnaws at Casamayor, according to DeCubas Jr., is that the Freitas defeat was Casamayor's first setback as a pro. There is a hint that Casamayor may not have prepared properly for the first fight. He may not have taken Freitas as seriously as he should have.

"To be honest, when Joel gets in the gym, he works his ass off, but there have been fights when he hasn't gotten up for, like the first Freitas fight," DeCubas Jr. said. "It takes a while to get that discipline when you're winning and don't really have to work that hard. It's something Joel didn't need to do much of his amateur and pro career.

"Right now, his maturity is the biggest difference. He's a completely different person. He's cancelled **Diego Corrales** out of the book, now we want Freitas. The Freitas fight bothers Joel a lot. Joel will come in in shape and determined. He'll be in the best shape of his life. Beating Corrales and now Freitas, this could put Joel on top of the world, where he wants to be."

Listen Up

April 28 is going to be a hot date. **Manny Pacquiao** and **Injin Chi** will square off on Macau Island (off the Chinese coast), at the opening of **Steve Wynn**'s new casino, Wynn Macau. "The obvious choice was Manny, with his huge Filipino following, as well as his Chinese and Japanese fans," said **Bruce Trampler**, the matchmaker for Top Rank.

Pacquiao, 43-3-2 (33), is coming off the best year of his career and was selected as THE RING's Fighter of the Year. "Pac-Man" ripped through 2006, stopping **Erik Morales** twice and decisioning **Oscar Larios**. It also has to be noted that four of Pacquiao's last five victories have come inside the distance.

This will be a huge step up for Chi, 31-3-1 (18). The WBC featherweight titlist will be venturing above 126 for the first time since 1997, when he stopped a journeyman named **Colin Graham** in one round. Chi, from Seoul, Korea, will surely draw in another faction from Southeast Asia to Wynn's new casino.

But whether or not he has the kind of firepower to hold off Pacquiao is another story. Chi hasn't stopped an opponent since his July 2004 10-round kayo of **Eiichi Sugama** in first defense of the WBC featherweight title. His last three fights have gone the distance, including a split-decision defeat to **Takashi Koshimoto**. Chi regained the WBC 126-pound strap by beating **Rodolfo Lopez** by unanimous decision in December 2006.

HBO may carry the fight, though pay-per-view is a possibility. ■

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

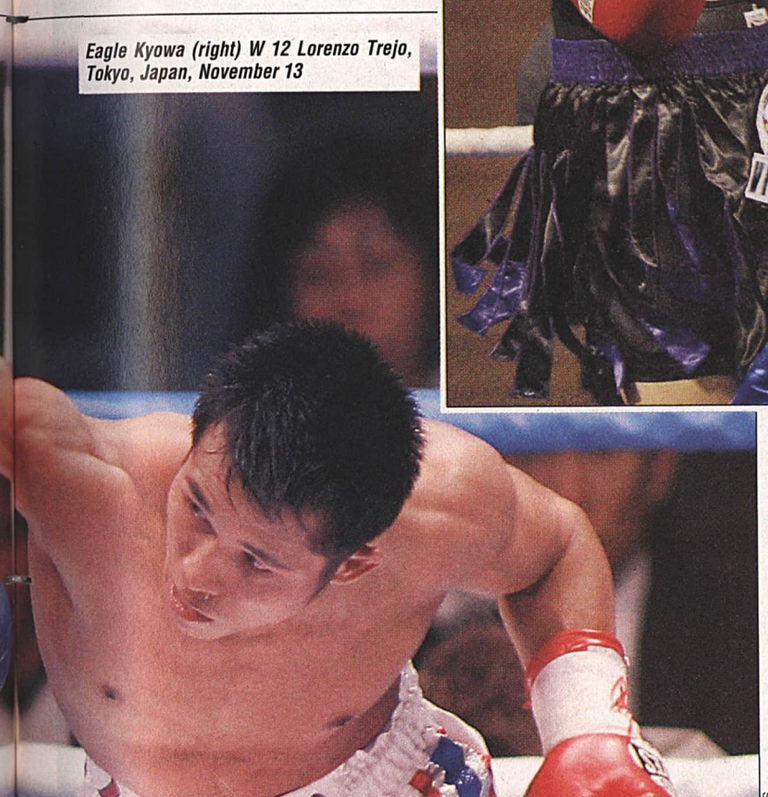
Pac-Man's 2006 campaign included two wins over Morales

The RING PRESENTS

THE YEAR IN PICTURES

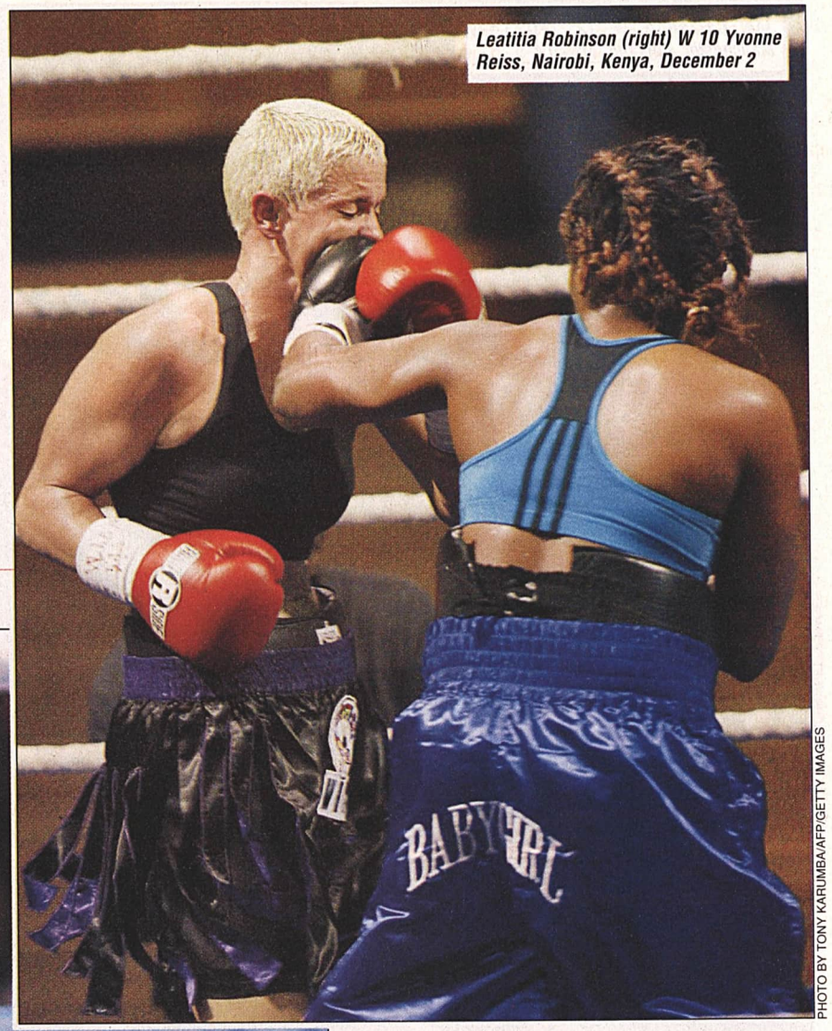
DIRECT CONNECT

It's not unusual for fighters and trainers to speak of boxing as a form of geometry, the branch of mathematics concerned with the properties and relationships of points, lines, angles, surfaces, and solids. If the solid is a gloved fist and the surface is an opponent's chin, the best way to get from one point to another is usually a straight line. But due to boxing's fluid, ever changing nature, sometimes the route to success comes in a curved motion in the form of a hook or an uppercut. But regardless of the angle used to deliver the blow, the desired effect is the same, as witnessed by the explosive images in this section.



Eagle Kyowa (right) W 12 Lorenzo Trejo, Tokyo, Japan, November 13

PHOTO BY TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Leatitia Robinson (right) W 10 Yvonne Reiss, Nairobi, Kenya, December 2

PHOTO BY TONY KARUMBA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Jeff Lacy, Manchester, England, March 4

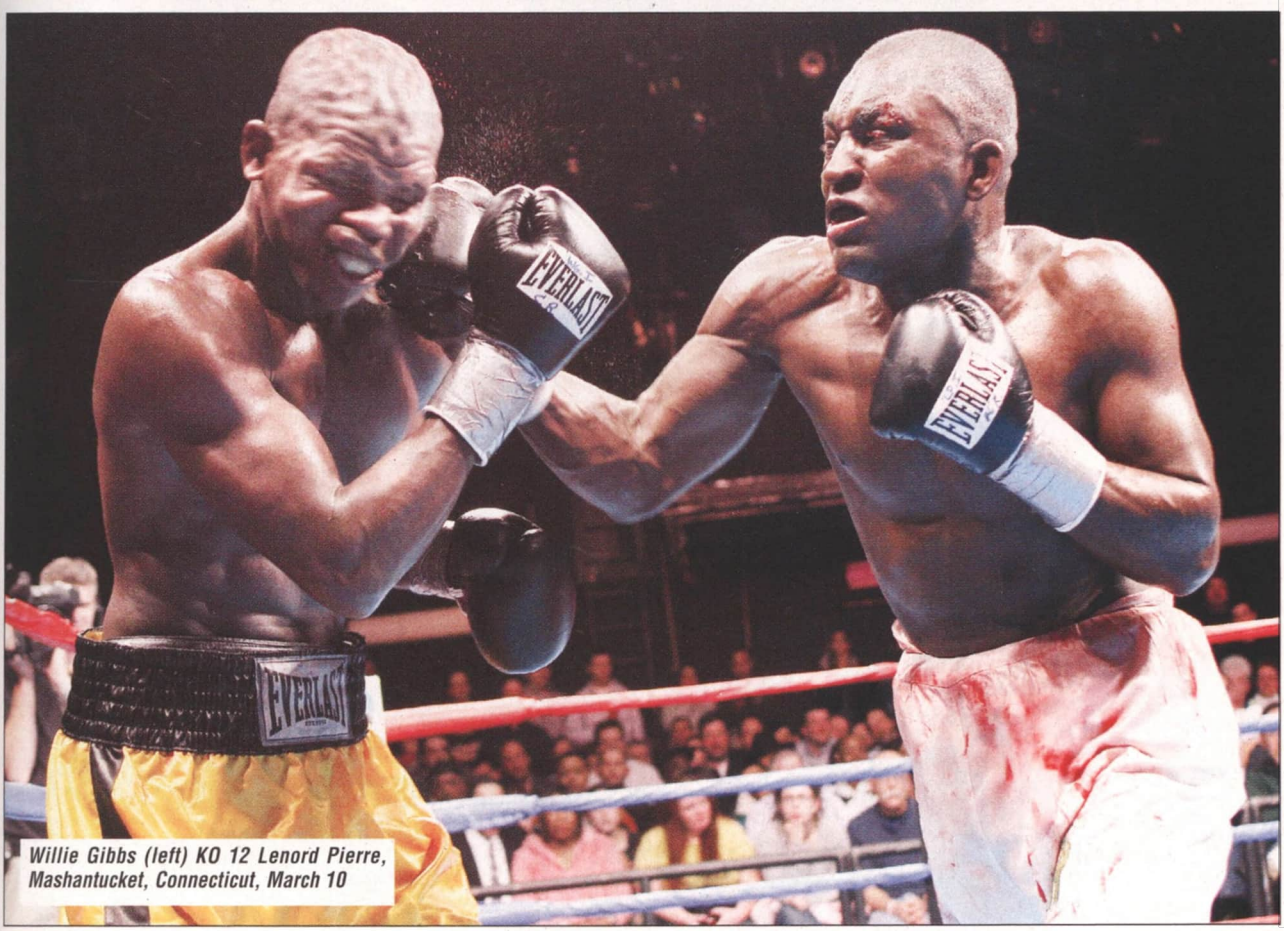
PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Marco Antonio Barrera (right) W 12 Rocky Juarez, Las Vegas, Nevada, September 16

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Jermain Taylor (right) W 12 Kassim Ouma, Little Rock, Arkansas, December 9

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN



Willie Gibbs (left) KO 12 Lenord Pierre, Mashantucket, Connecticut, March 10

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bernard Hopkins (right) W 12 Antonio Tarver, Atlantic City, New Jersey, June 10

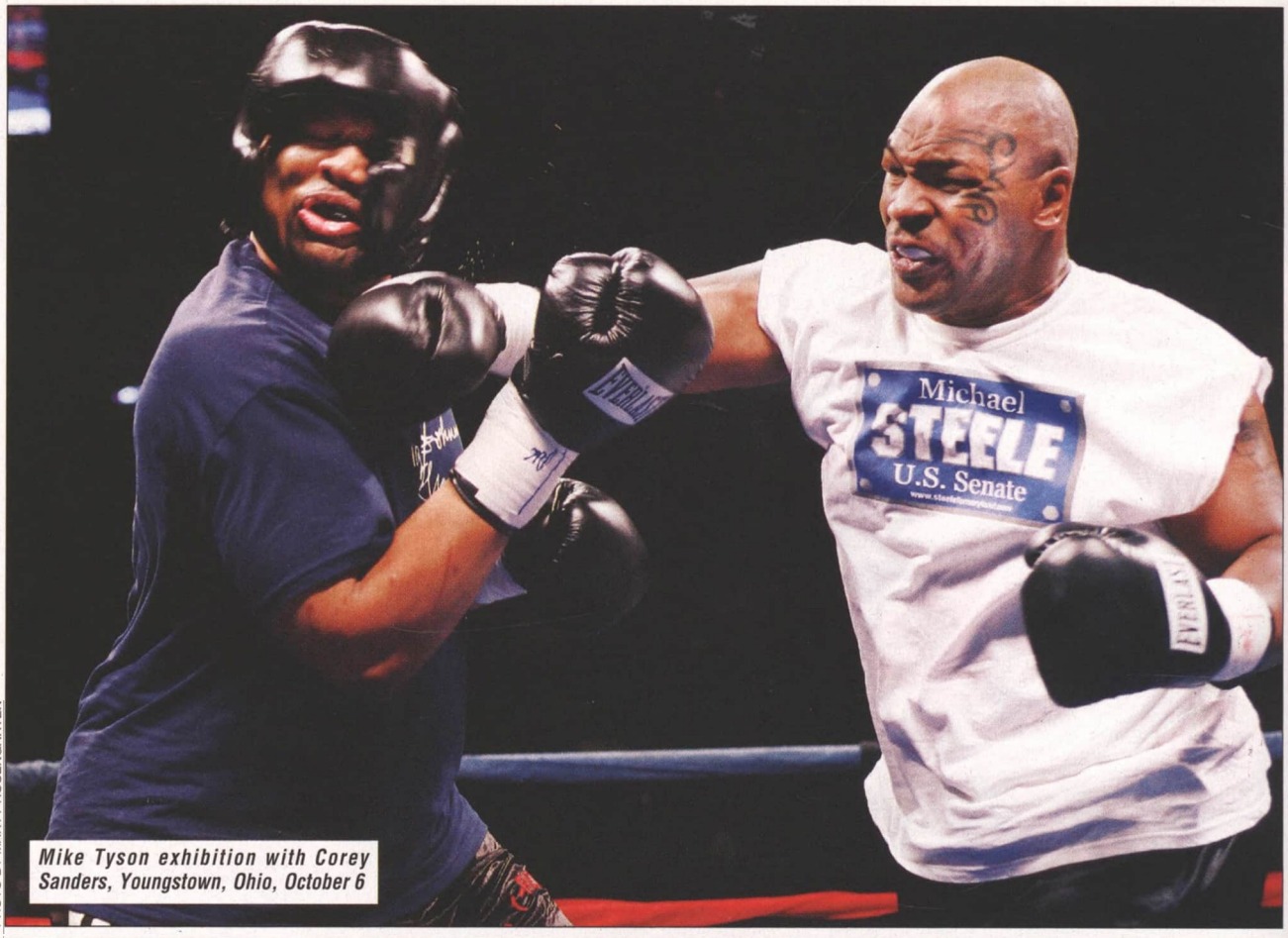
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Hasim Rahman D 10 James Toney, Atlantic City, New Jersey, March 18

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Tony Thompson (right) W 12 Dominick Guinn, San Jose, California, June 28



Mike Tyson exhibition with Corey Sanders, Youngstown, Ohio, October 6

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Emanuel Augustus KO 10 Jaime Rangel, Mashantucket, Connecticut, February 10

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Marco Antonio Barrera W 12 Rocky Juarez, Los Angeles, California, May 20

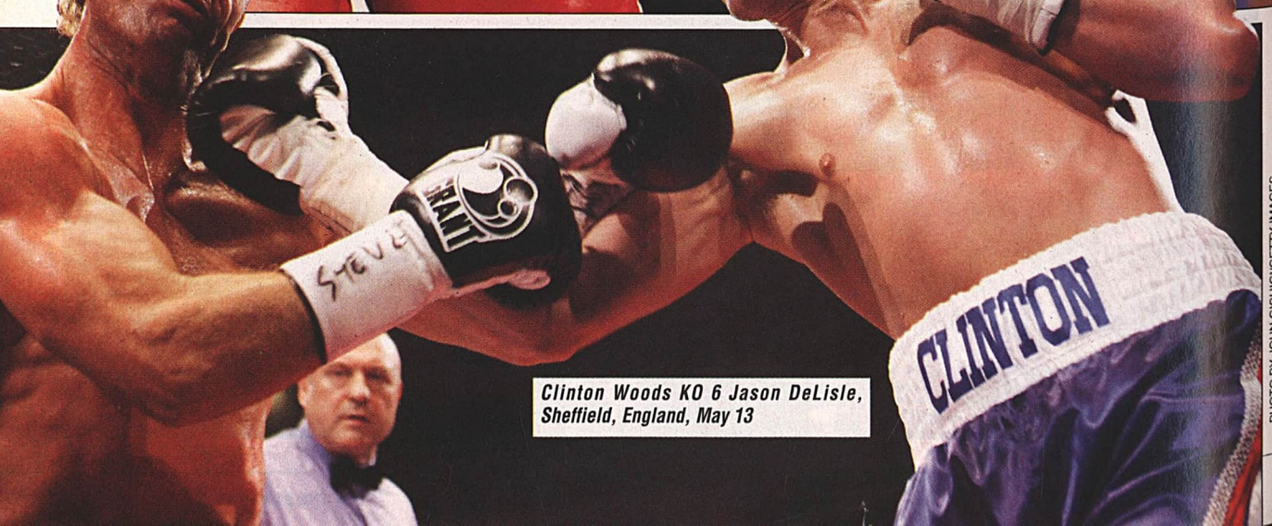
PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

Wladimir Klitschko KO 7 Chris Byrd, Mannheim, Germany, April 22

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HEIMANN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Peter Malinga (left) D 6 Welcome Ntshingila, Johannesburg, South Africa, March 3

PHOTO BY LEFTY SHIVAMBU/TOUCHLINE/GETTY IMAGES



Clinton Woods KO 6 Jason DeLisle, Sheffield, England, May 13

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

O'Neil Bell (right) KO 10 Jean-Marc Mormeck, New York City, January 7

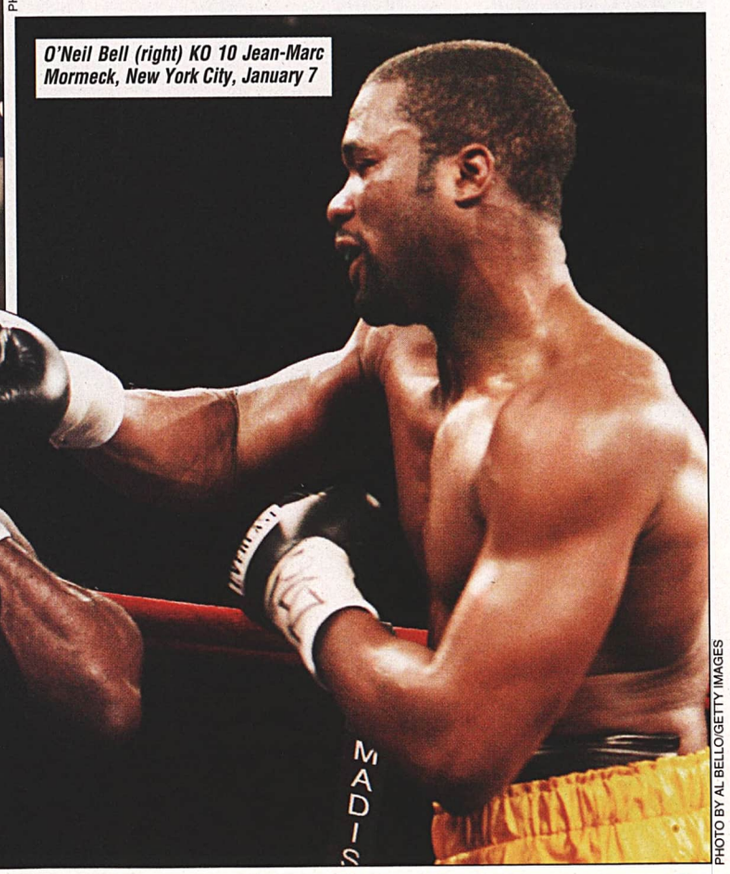


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Junior Witter (left) W 12 DeMarcus Corley, London, England, September 15

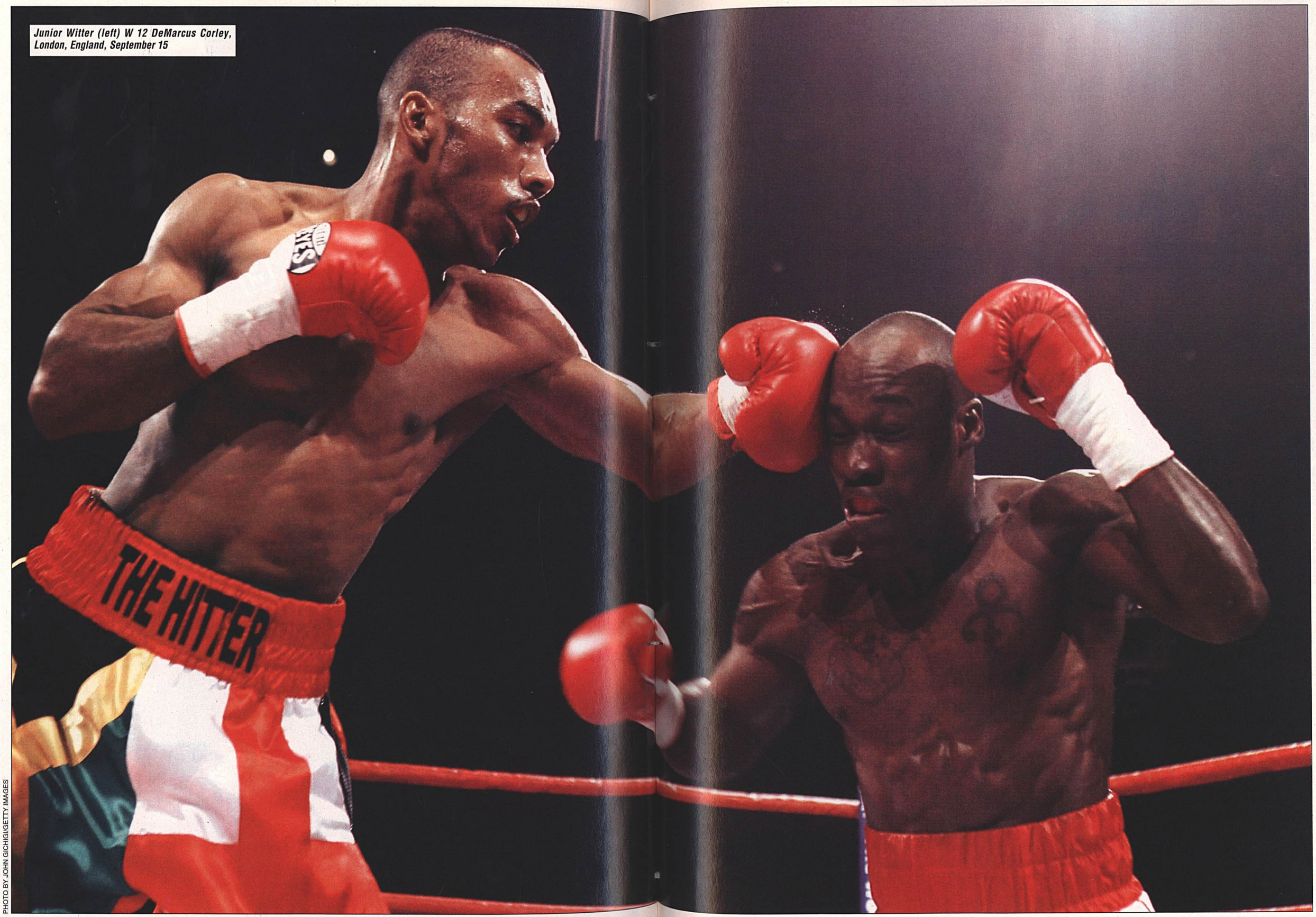
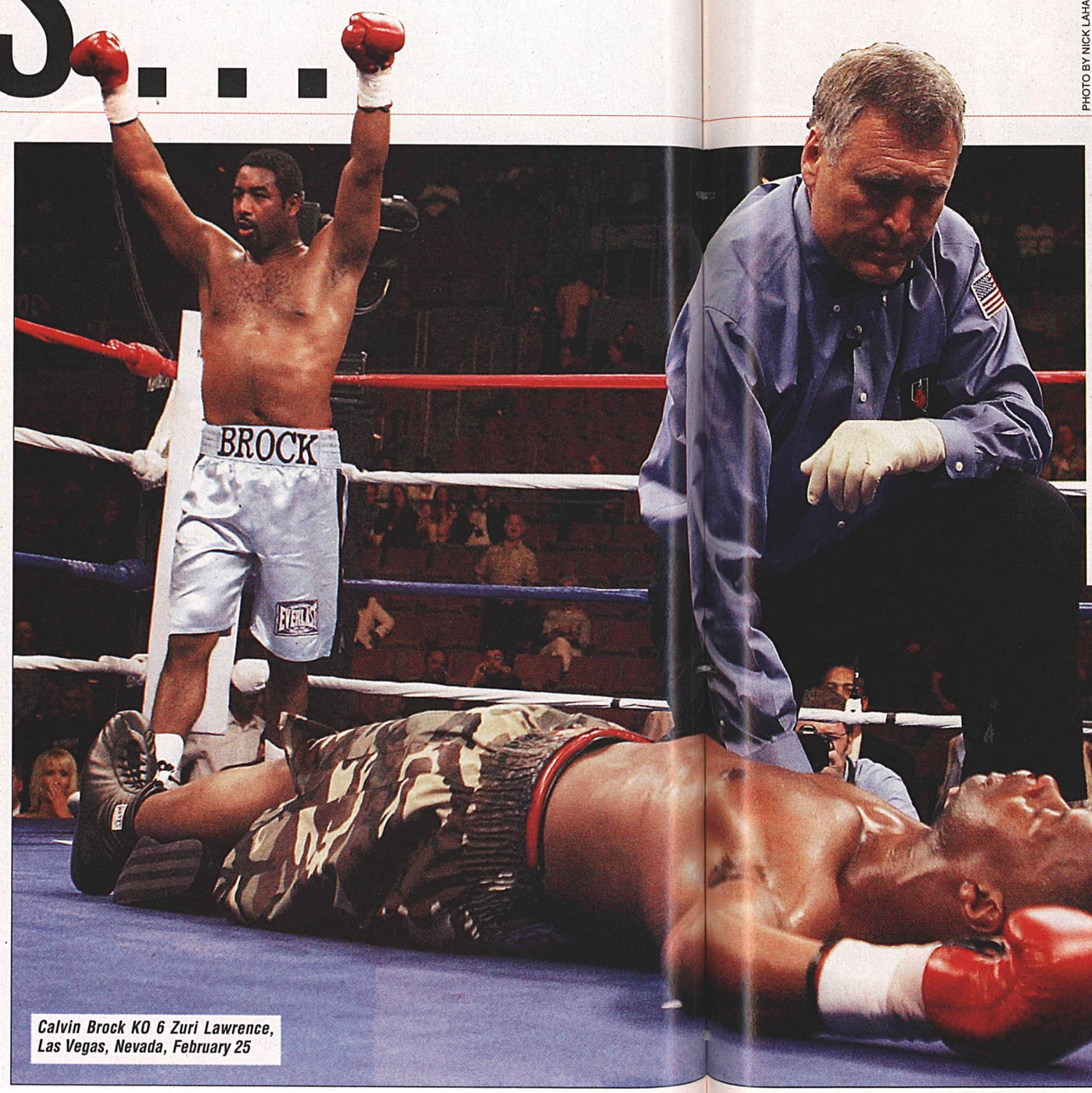


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

DOWN GOES....

Not only "Fraaa-zier," as in Howard Cosell's classic call of George Foreman's savage knockout of Joe Frazier, but virtually anybody who gives and receives punches for pay. It's a risk all boxers take every time they duck between the ropes and one of the main reasons fans plunk down hard-earned cash to watch. The victim of a knockdown often says he never saw the one that put him on the floor, but it's the job of the boxing photographer to capture the moment so it can be revisited again and again, an exhilarating spectacle to rival anything in sports. It only takes a split second to happen, but the consequences can last forever.



Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence, Las Vegas, Nevada, February 25

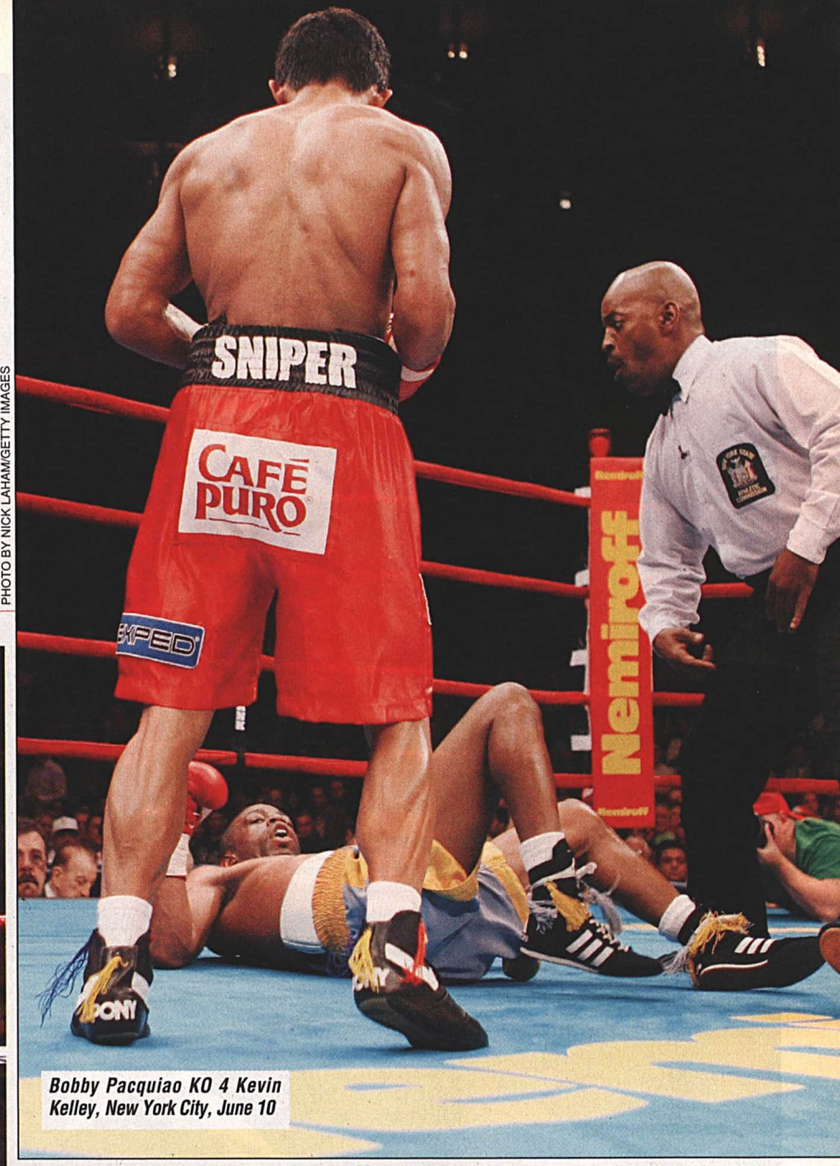


PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Bobby Pacquiao KO 4 Kevin Kelley, New York City, June 10

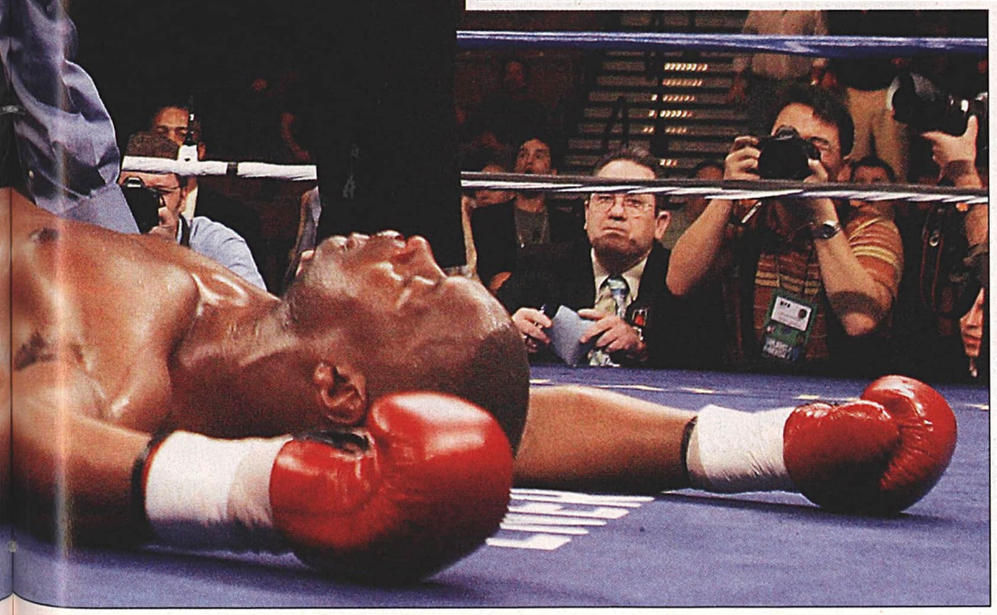


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Javier Castillejo KO 10 Felix Sturm, Hamburg, Germany, July 15

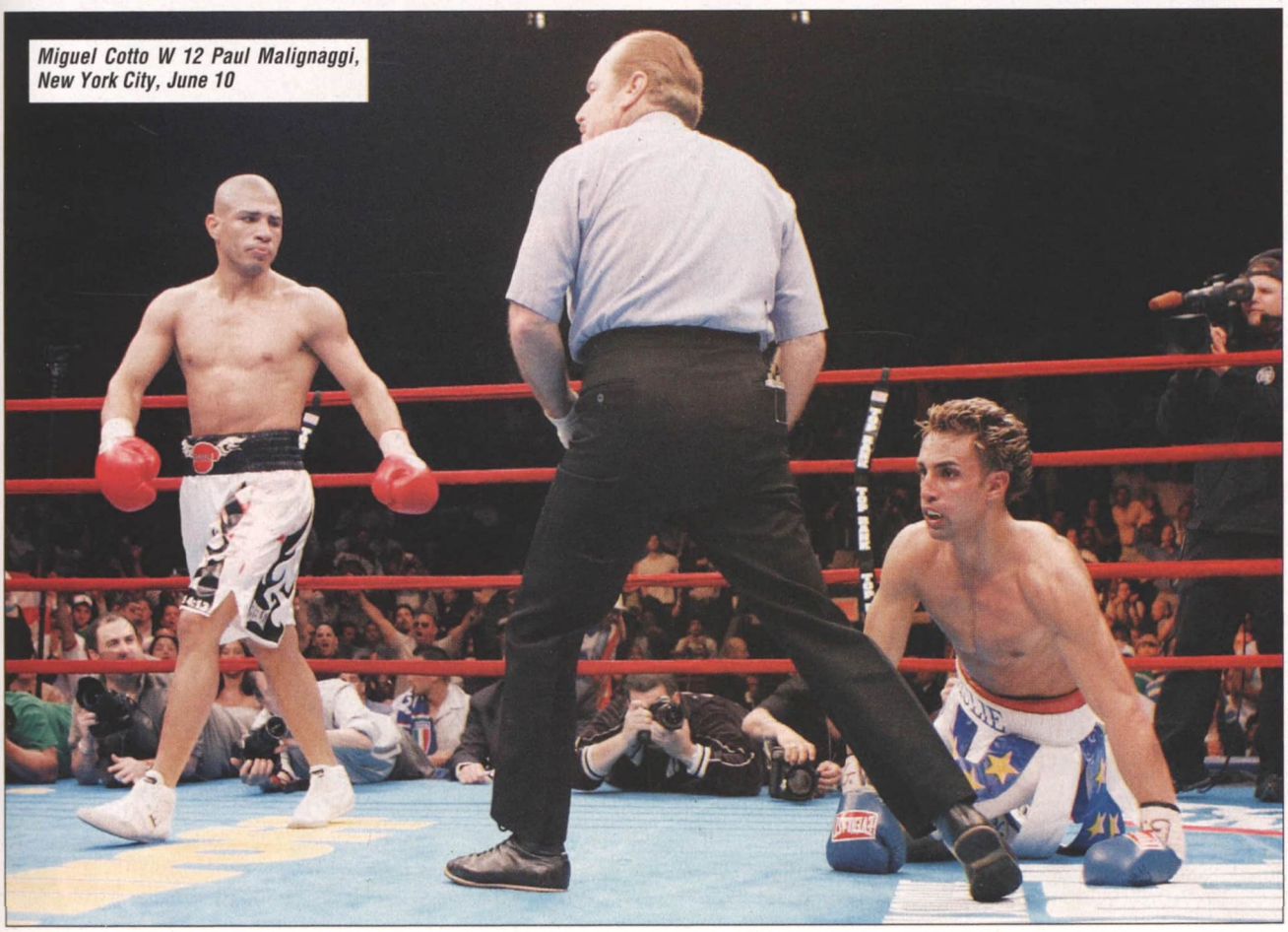
PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSS/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao KO 3 Erik Morales, Las Vegas, Nevada, November 19

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Oscar De La Hoya KO 6 Ricardo Mayorga, Las Vegas, Nevada, May 6

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES



Miguel Cotto W 12 Paul Malignaggi, New York City, June 10

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

David Haye KO 9 Giacobbe Fragomeni, London, England, November 17

PHOTO BY:JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Nicolay Valuev KO 3 Owen Beck, Hannover, Germany, June 3

PHOTO BY RONNY HARTMANN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Oleg Maskaev KO 12 Hasim Rahman, Las Vegas, Nevada, August 12

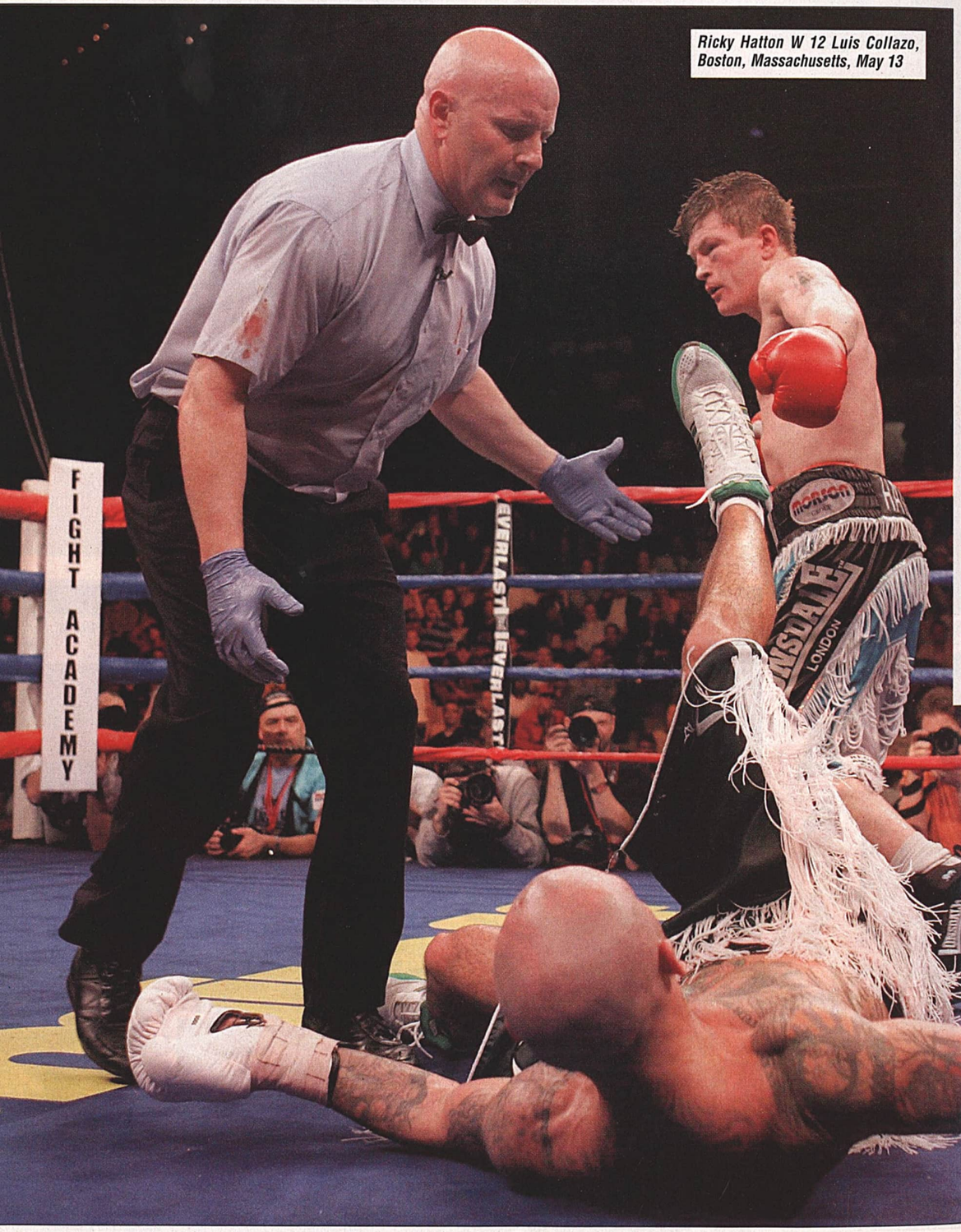
PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao KO 10 Erik Morales, Las Vegas, Nevada, January 21

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

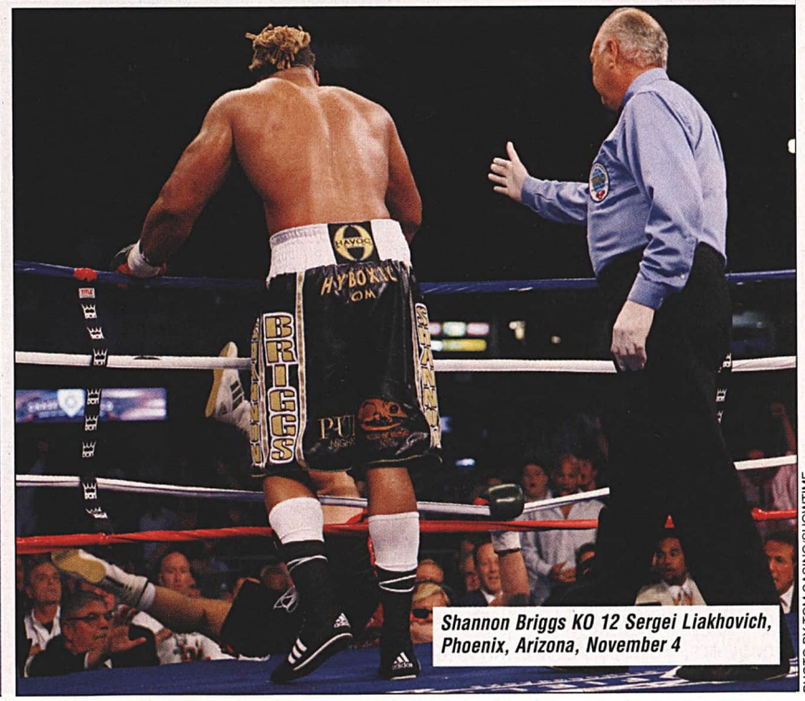
PHOTO BT NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES



Ricky Hatton W 12 Luis Collazo, Boston, Massachusetts, May 13

Carlos Baldomir KO 9 Arturo Gatti, Atlantic City, New Jersey, July 22

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

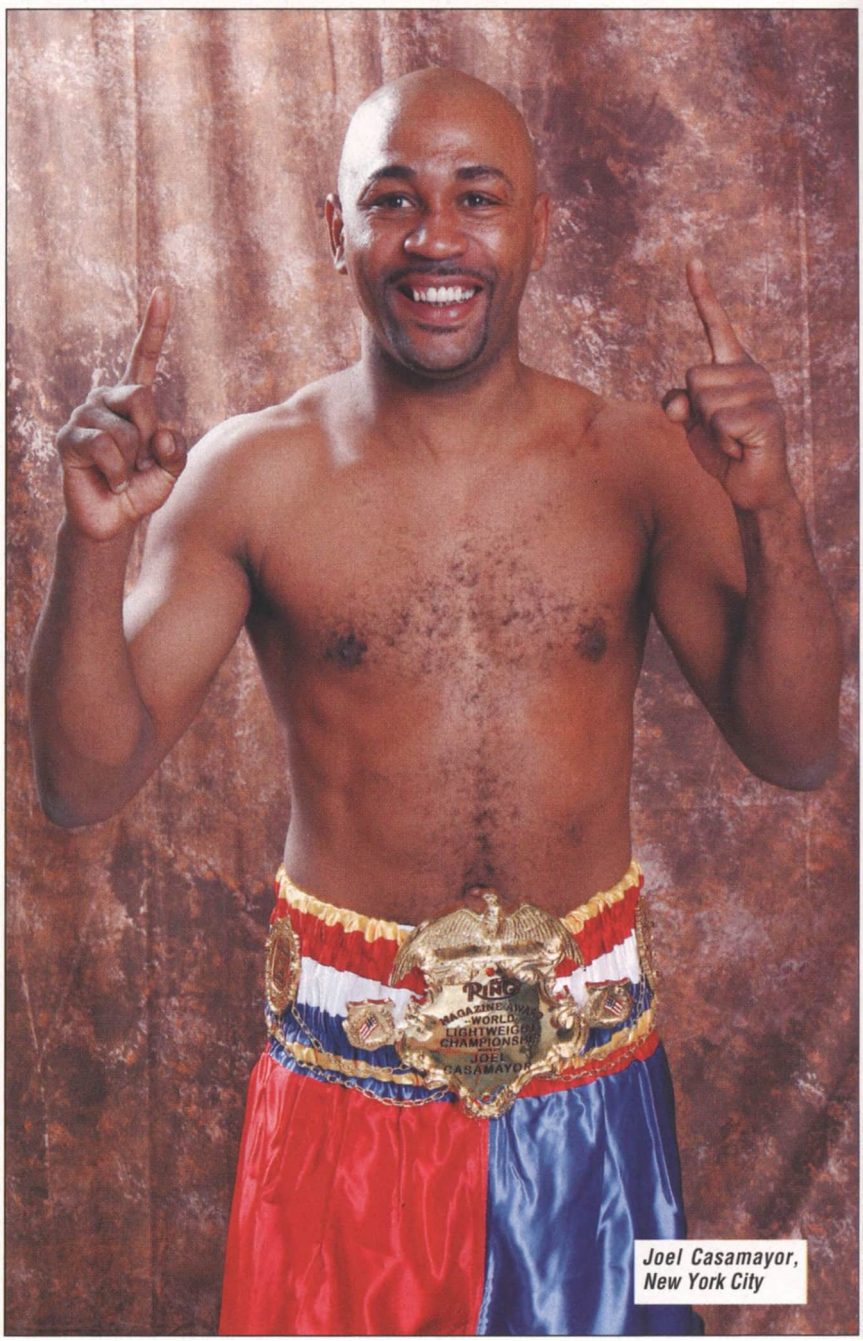


Shannon Briggs KO 12 Sergei Liakhovich, Phoenix, Arizona, November 4

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

THE ONLY BELT THAT COUNTS

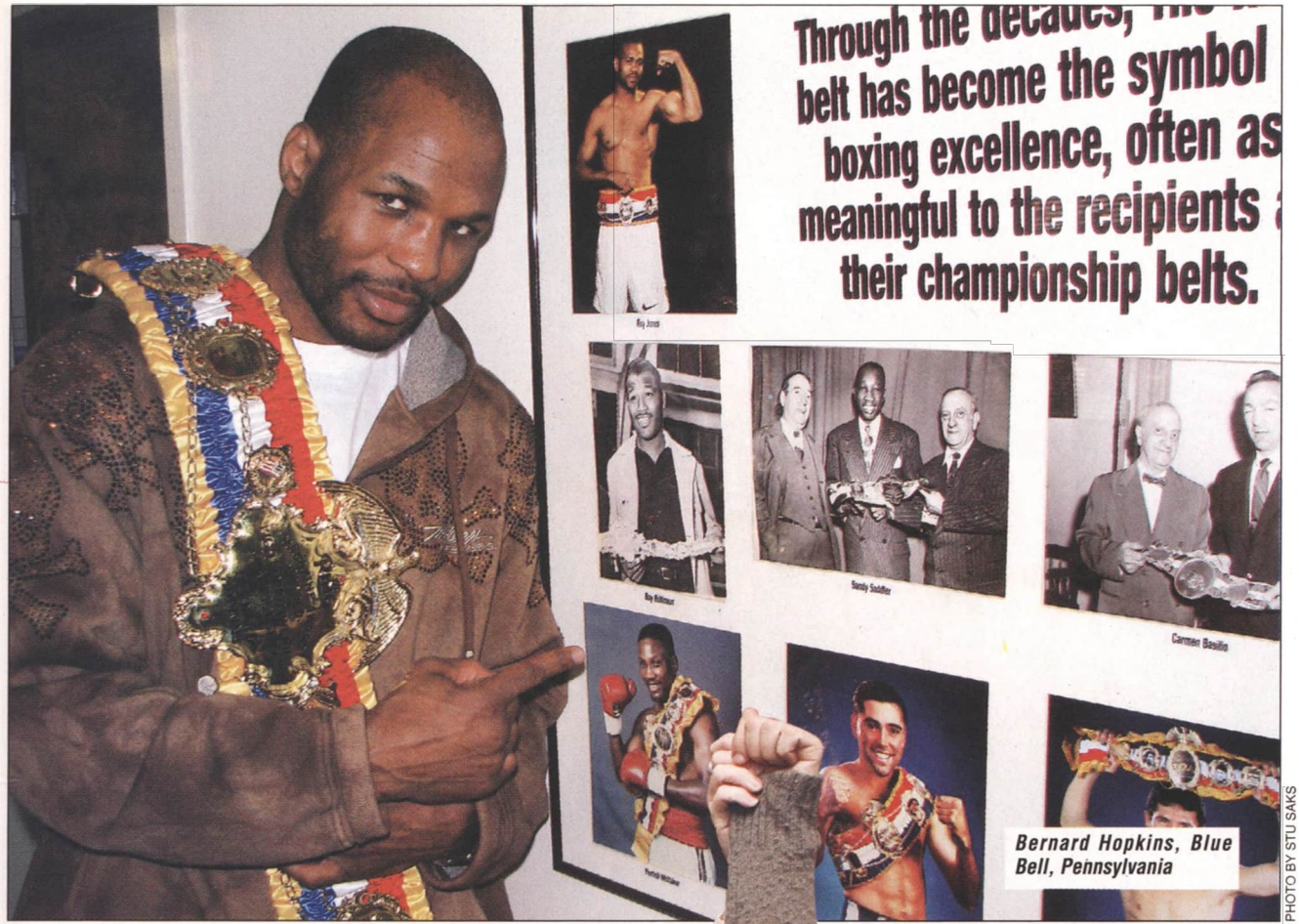
Anybody who does not understand the significance of THE RING championship belt should take a close look at the image of Bernard Hopkins on display here. He is pictured pointing at a collection of photographs showing legendary fighters from Ray Robinson and Sandy Saddler to Roy Jones and Oscar De La Hoya proudly displaying their RING belts. These are the best of the best, the men who have taken a brutal business and turned it into an art form. And even in this confusing era of split titles and a seemingly endless parade of alphabet titleholders, THE RING belt remain the only reliable symbol of a true champion.



Joel Casamayor, New York City

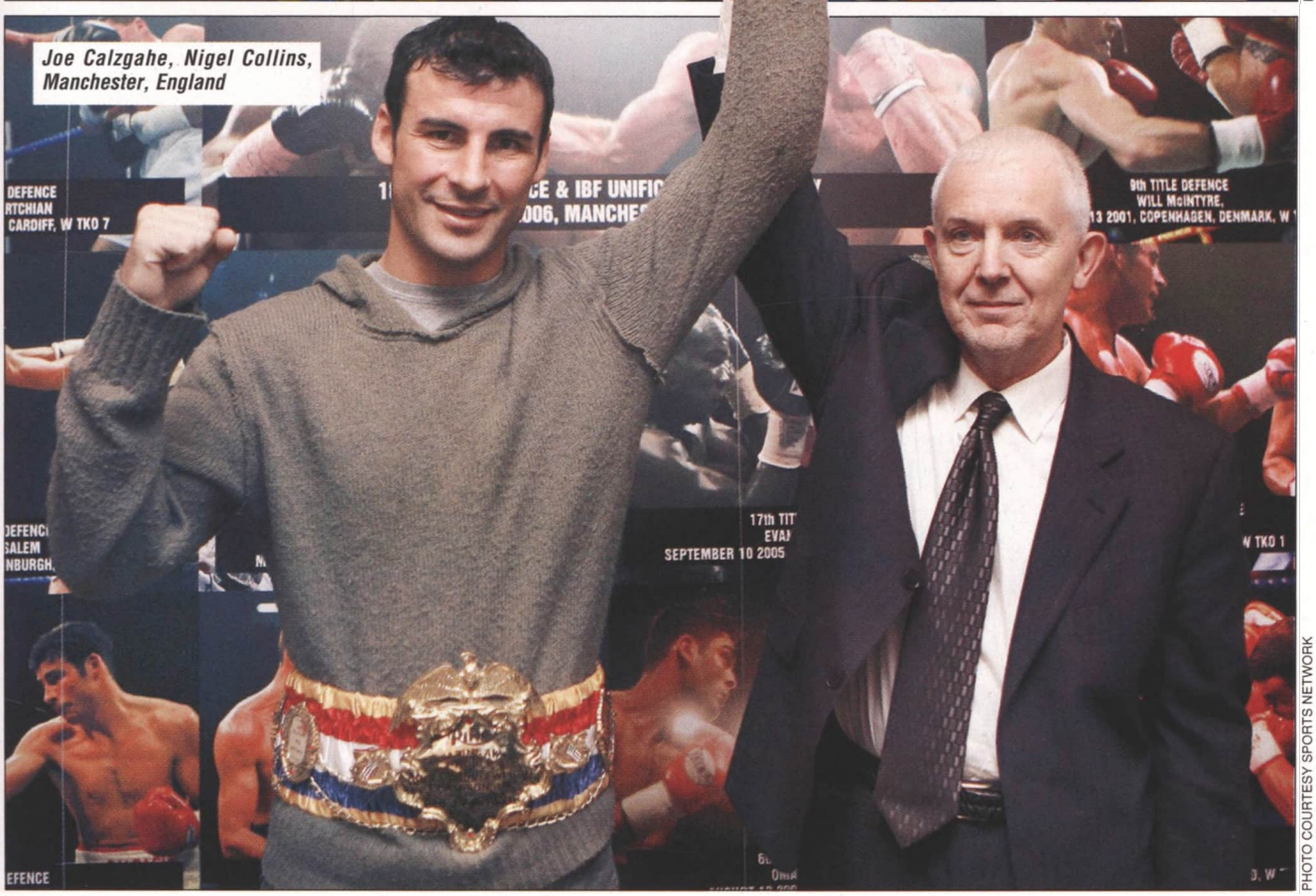
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Through the decades, the ... belt has become the symbol ... boxing excellence, often as ... meaningful to the recipients ... their championship belts.



Bernard Hopkins, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

PHOTO BY STU SAKS

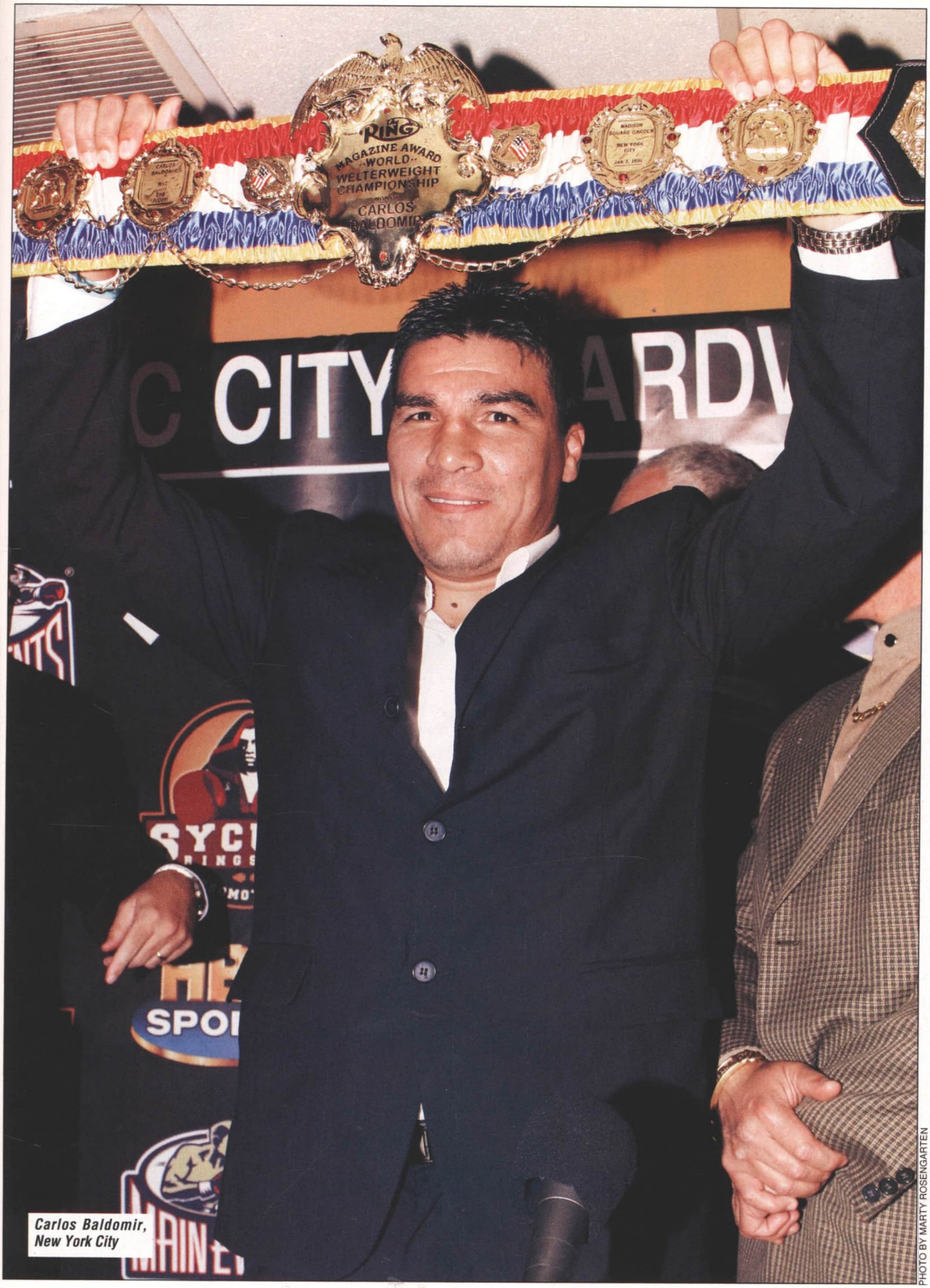


Joe Calzgahe, Nigel Collins, Manchester, England

PHOTO COURTESY SPORTS NETWORK

Ricky Hatton, Las Vegas, Nevada

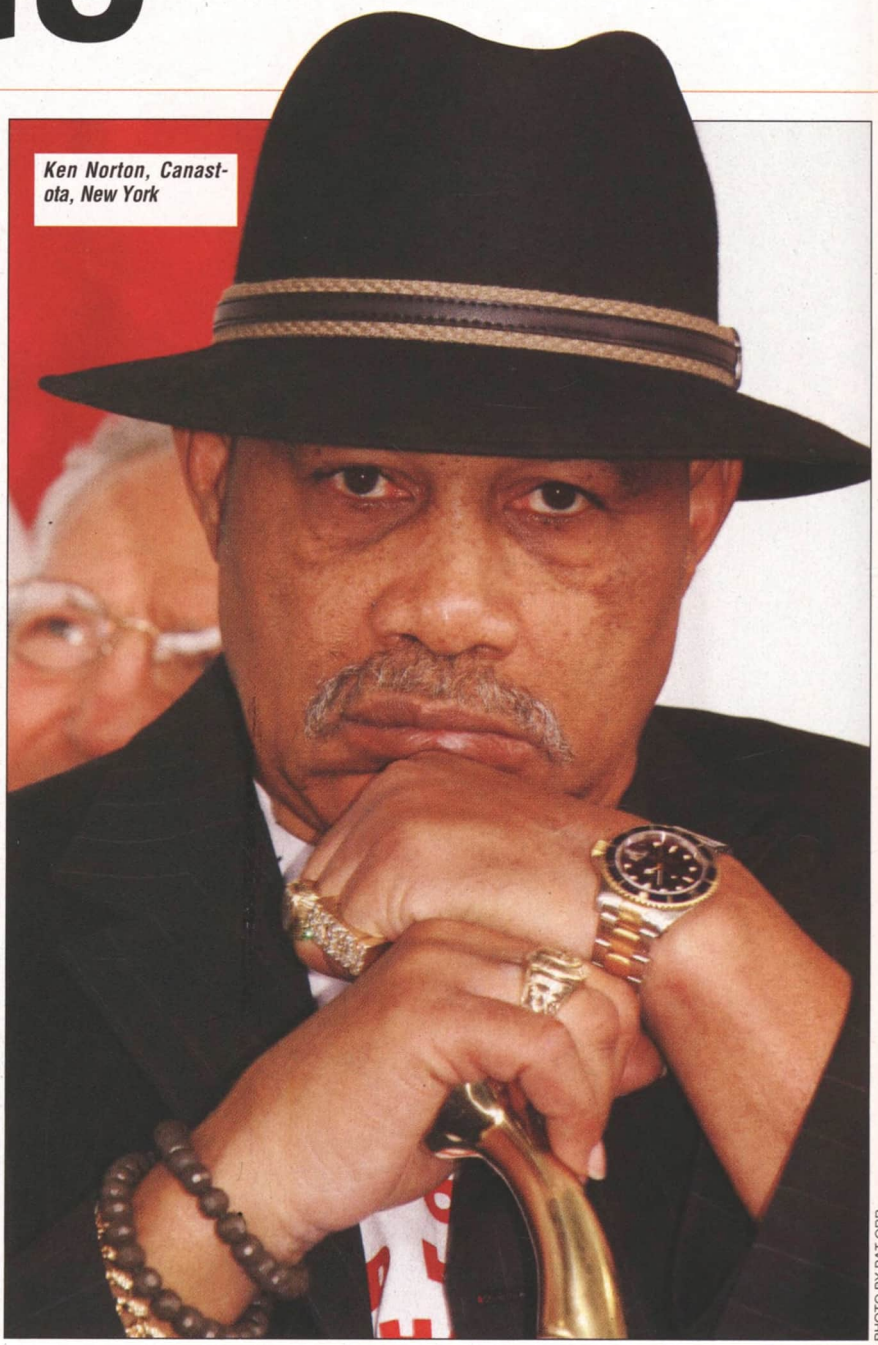
PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS



Carlos Baldomir, New York City

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PUG MUGS



Ken Norton, Canastota, New York

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

If the eyes are the windows to the soul, then it can also be said that the faces of fighters and fight people are the canvases upon which their stories are painted. Bruised and battered, etched in pain or bathed in ecstasy, these countenances reveal not only the history of battles won and lost, but also the hopes and dreams of tomorrow. Crooked noses, scar-encrusted eyebrows, and misshapen ears are not traditionally seen as a sign of beauty. But when you understand the heroic struggles they represent, they become quite marvelous in their own right and take on an aura of humanity as basic and pure as the urge as mankind's oldest fight—the fight for survival.

Lou DiBella, Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Fernando Vargas, Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Wladimir Sidorenko, Hamburg, Germany, July 15

PHOTO BY MARTIN ROSS/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Arturo Gatti, Atlantic City, New Jersey

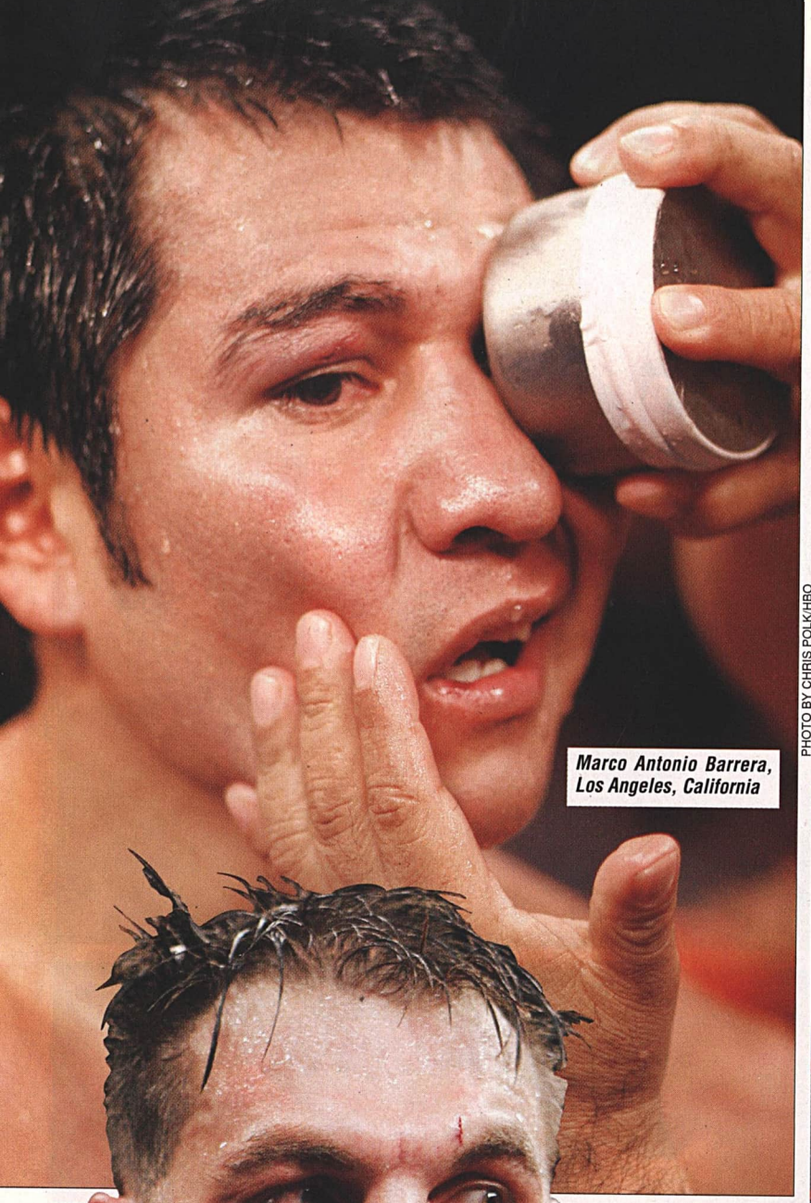
PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Jeff Lacy, Manchester, England

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Samuel Peter, Los Angeles, California

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

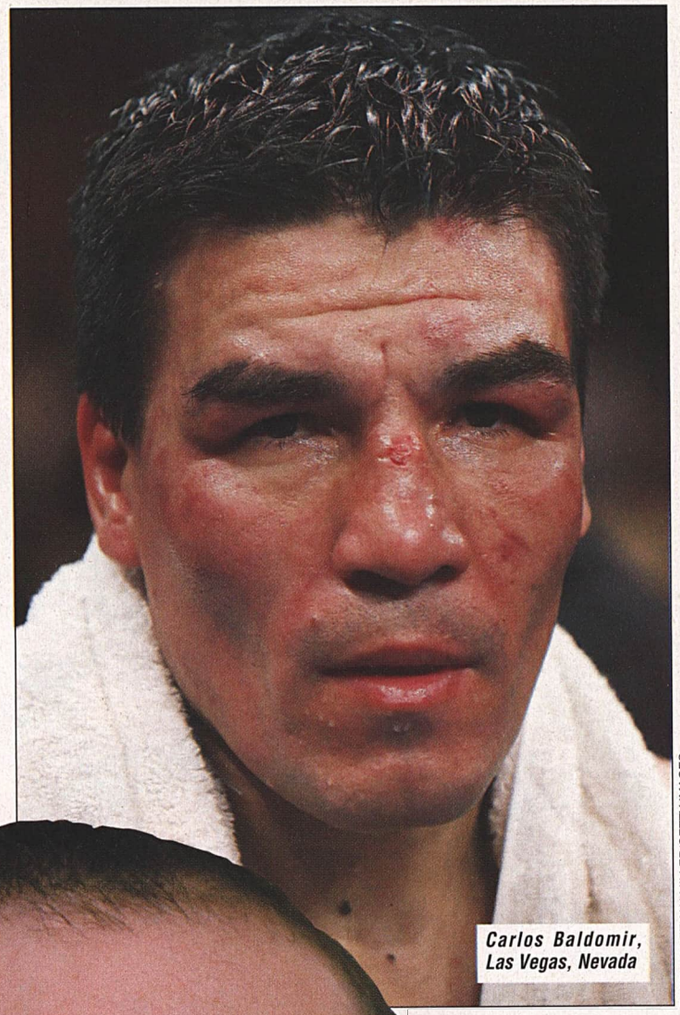


Marco Antonio Barrera, Los Angeles, California

PHOTO BY CHRIS POLK/HBO

Nick Durandt, Johannesburg, South Africa

PHOTO BY SHIVAMBU GALLO/GETTY IMAGES

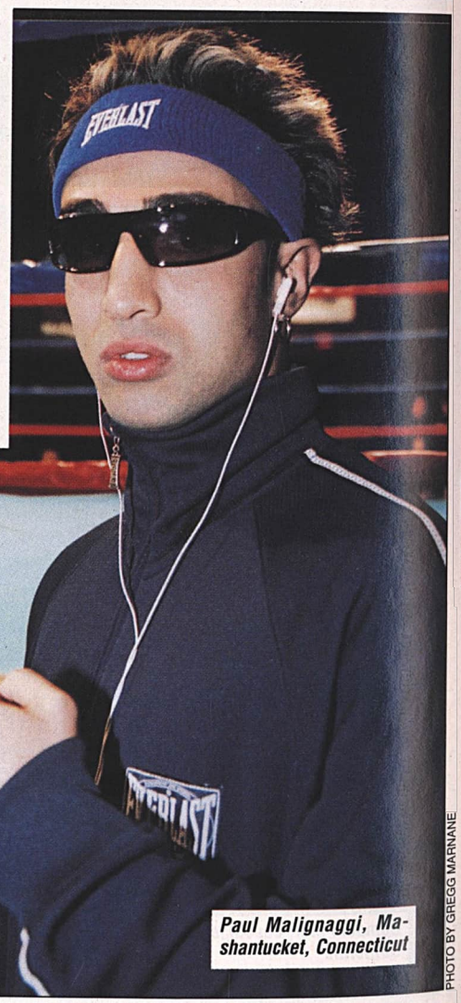


Carlos Baldomir, Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Oleg Maskaev, Las Vegas, Nevada, August 12

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



Paul Malignaggi, Mashantucket, Connecticut

PHOTO BY GREGG MARINANE

Scott Harrison, London, England

PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Arturo Gatti, New York City

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Amir Khan, London, England

PHOTO BY SCOTT BARBOUR/GETTY IMAGES

Peter Manfredo Jr., Providence, Rhode Island

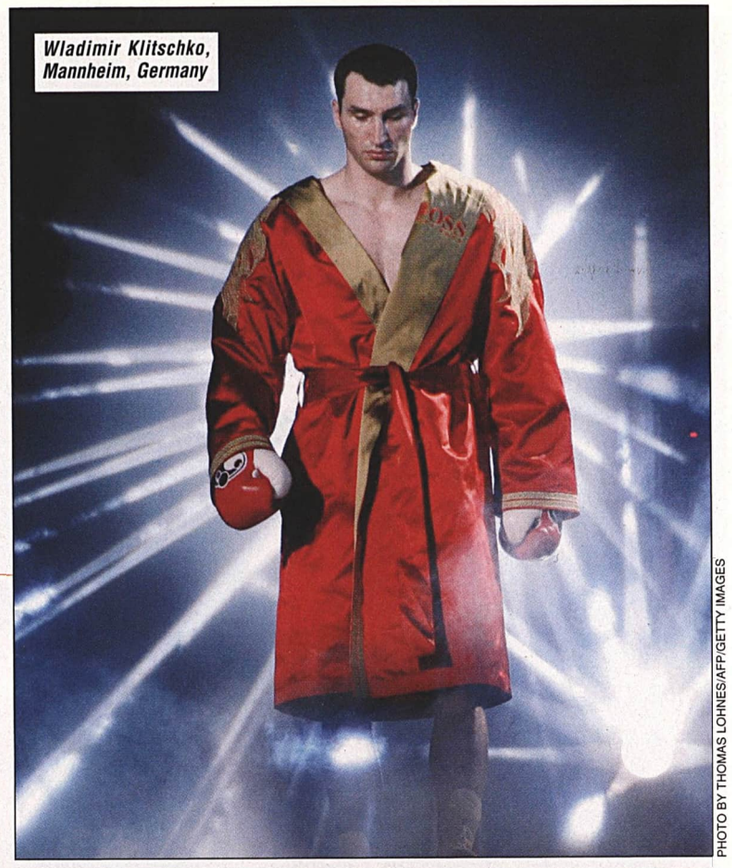
PHOTO BY AL BELLO GETTY IMAGES

BEYOND THE SQUARED CIRCLE

The actual fighting is a very small part of boxers' lives, even if you count the sparring along with actual bouts. But real fighters are fighters 24 hours a day, even when at play or spending time with their families. Then there is training, of course, as well as media events, photo sessions, and hanging out with other celebrities. And after seeing these outside-of-the-ring images, you can't help but ponder such esoteric questions as how much or how little time Floyd Mayweather spent thinking about his ring entrance for the Carlos Baldomir fight, or if Baldomir got a real $1-million check to match the oversized souvenir. They are, in the end, images that are as revealing as those taken at the height of combat, and, ironically, give us a greater understanding of the athletes we follow for what they do during the smallest but most essential part of their lives.

Sugar Ray Leonard, Indianapolis, Indiana

PHOTO BY CHAD BUCHANAN/GETTY IMAGES

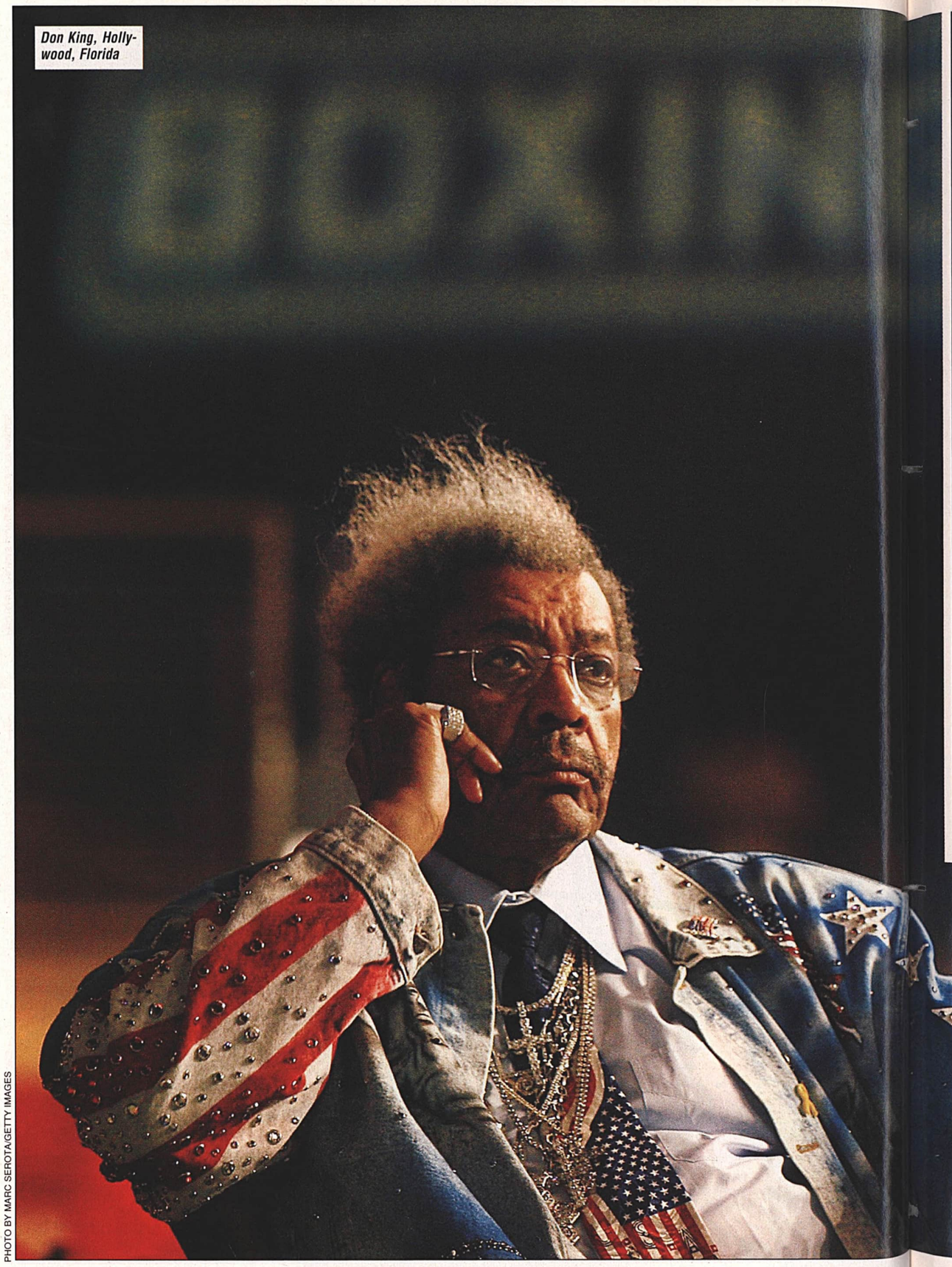


Wladimir Klitschko, Mannheim, Germany

PHOTO BY THOMAS LOHNES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Joe Louis' grave, Arlington, Virginia

PHOTO BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES



Don King, Hollywood, Florida

PHOTO BY MARC SEROTA/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao, Manila, Philippines

PHOTO BY JAY DIRECTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Shane Mosley (with children, Najee, Mee Yon, and Taiseki) LaVerne, California

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Wladimir Klitschko. Hamburg, Germany

PHOTO BY FRIEDMANN VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Peter Manfredo Jr. (and mother Lori), Providence, Rhode Island

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Gypsy Joe Harris' grave (brother Anthony Molock, historian John DiSanto, sisters Arneta Miller, Renee Rex), Bala Cynwood, Pennsylvania

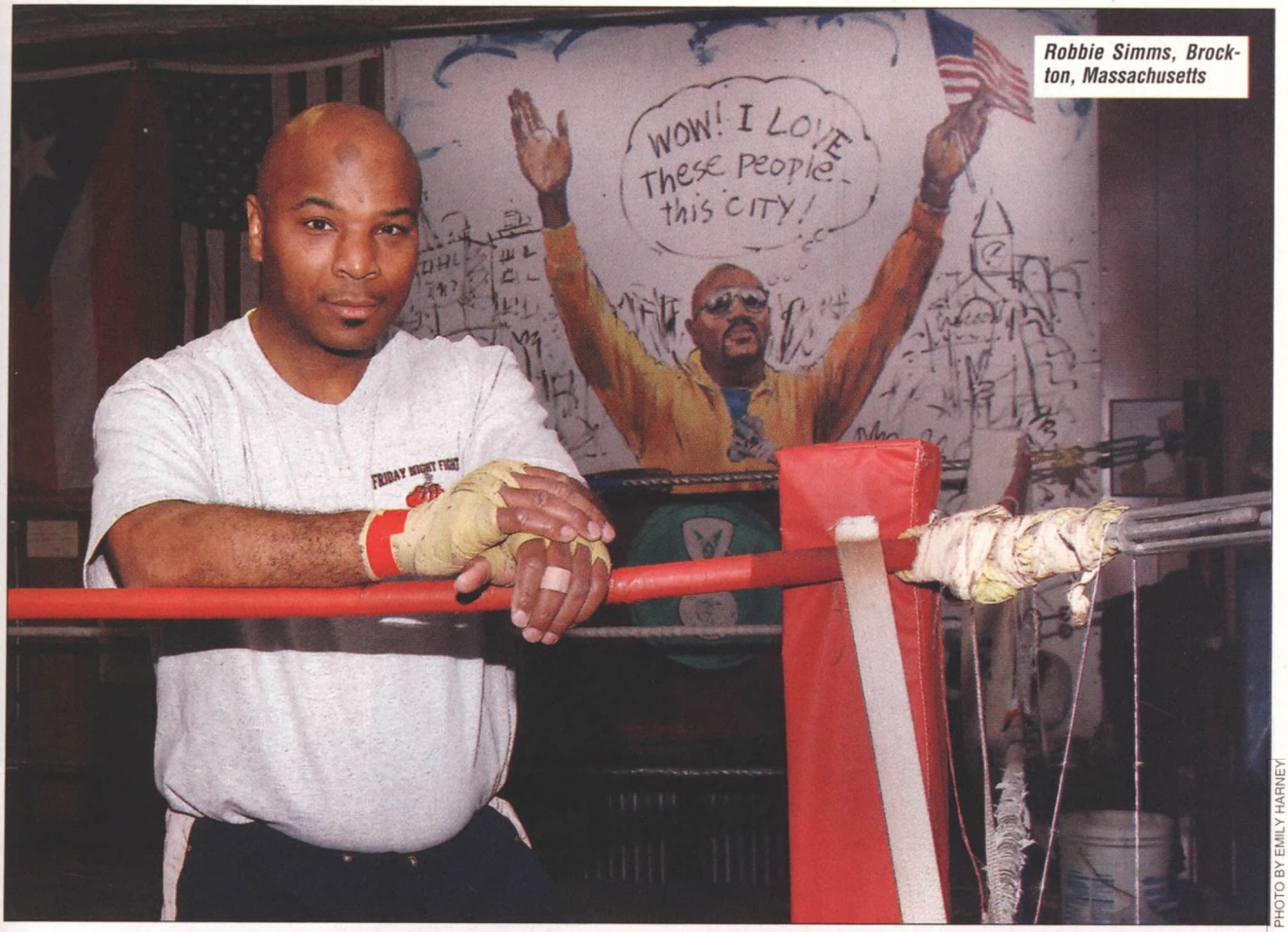
PHOTO BY JACK TINNEY

Felix Trinidad, Busta Rhymes, Winky Wright, Brooklyn, New York

PHOTO BY KRITSY LEIBOWITZ/GETTY IMAGES

Muhammad Ali, Usher, Louisville, Kentucky

PHOTO BY PAUL HAWTHORN/GETTY IMAGES



Robbie Simms, Brockton, Massachusetts

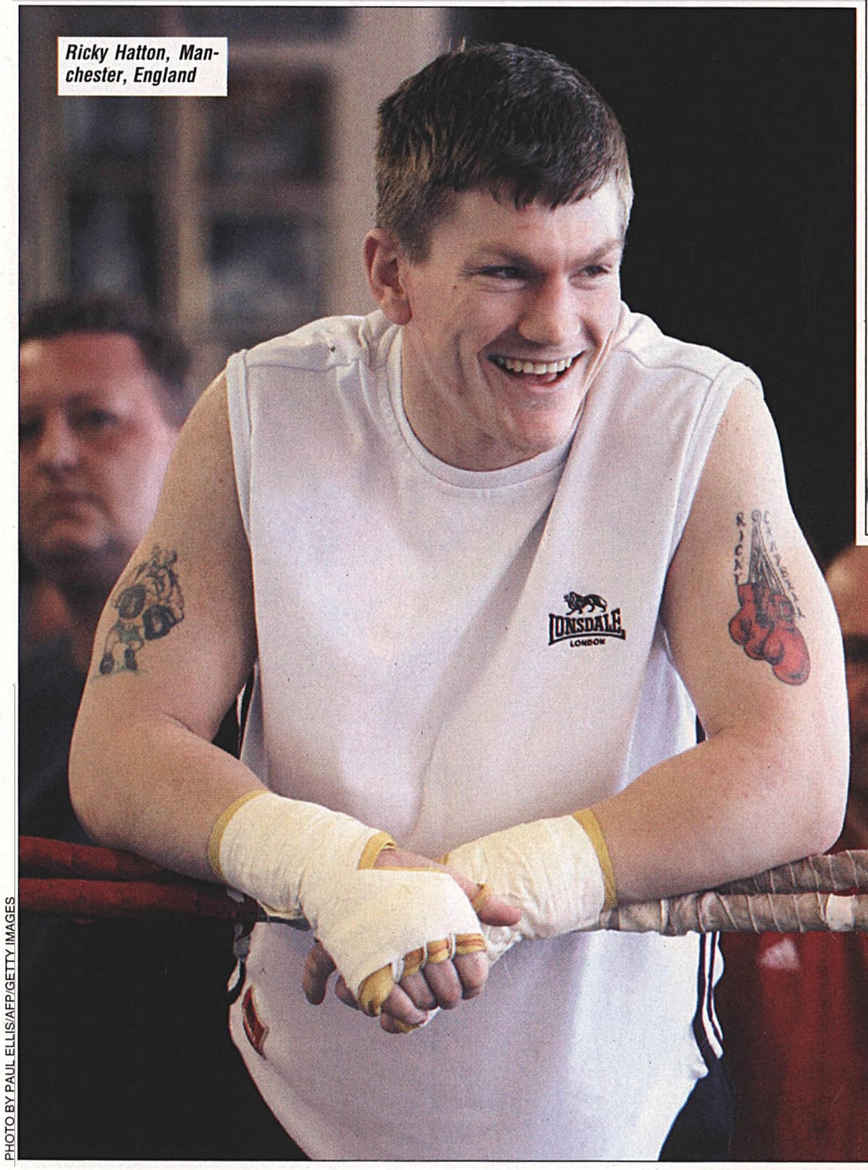
PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

President Gloria Arroyo, Manny Pacquiao, Manila, Philippines

PHOTO BY JOEL NITO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

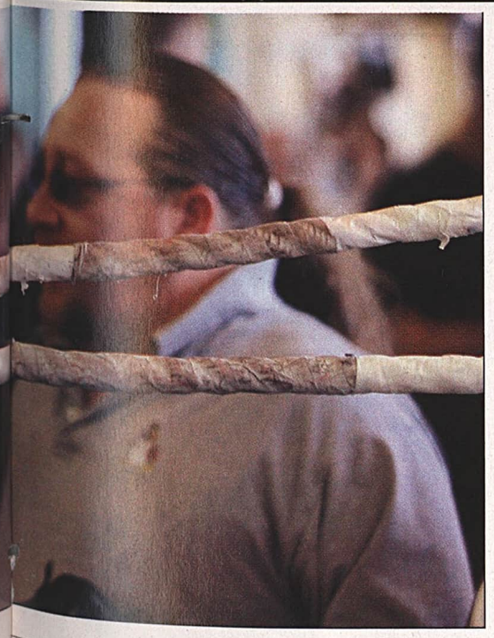
George Foreman, London, England

PHOTO BY JEREMY O'DONNELL/GETTY IMAGES



Ricky Hatton, Manchester, England

PHOTO BY PAUL ELLIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

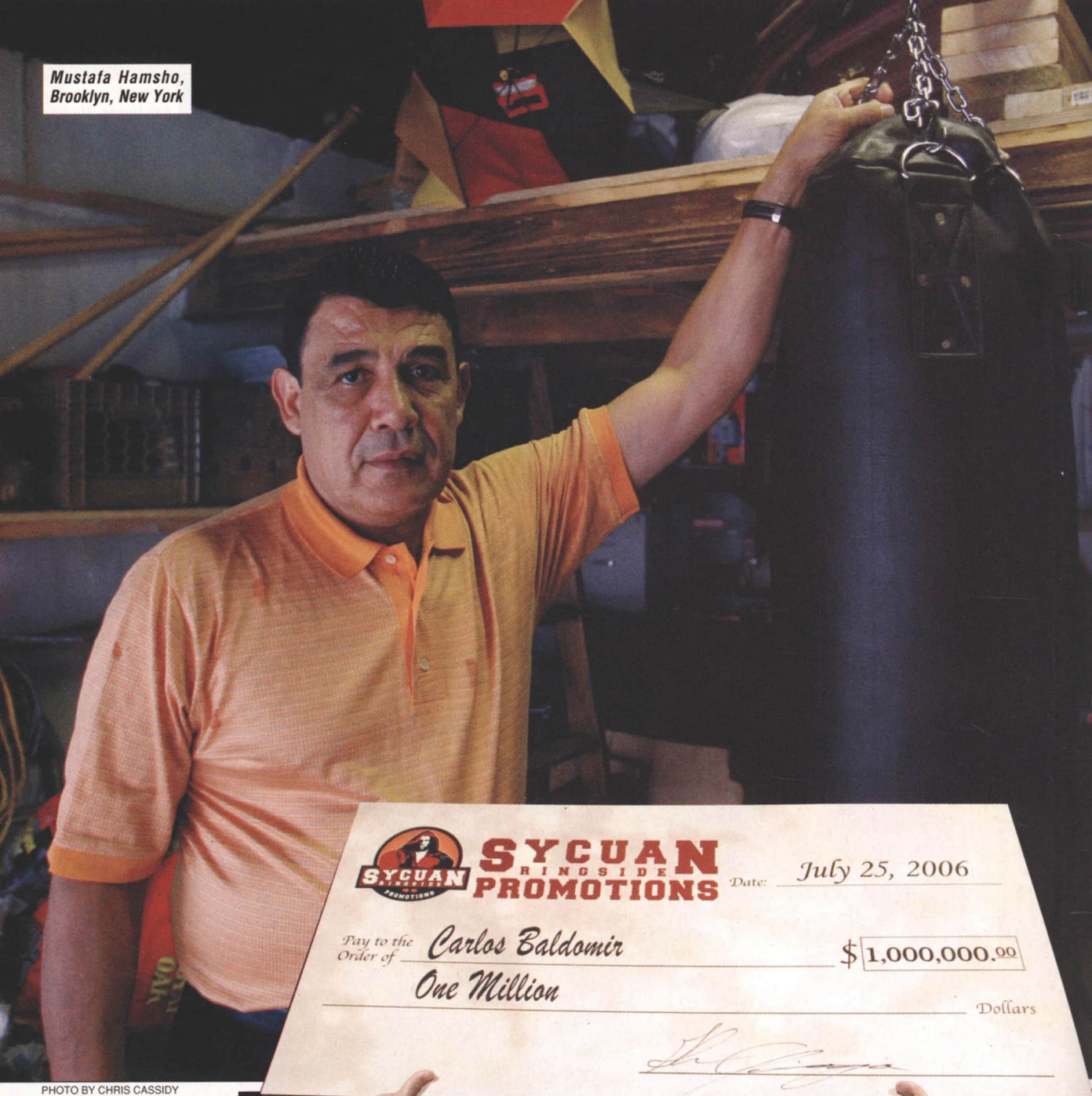


Floyd Mayweather,
Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

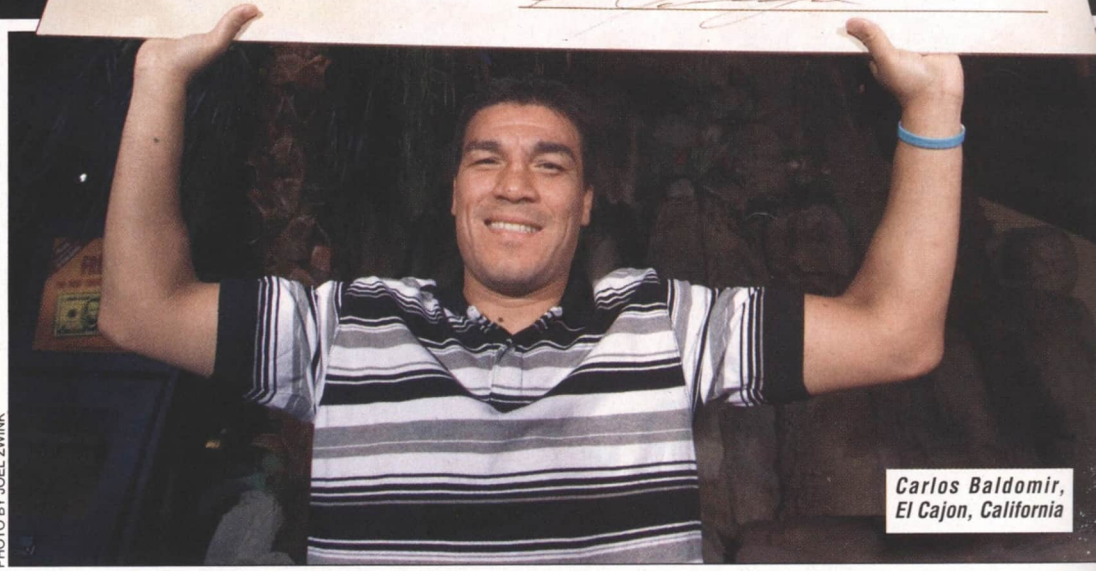
Floyd Mayweather,
Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



Mustafa Hamsho, Brooklyn, New York

PHOTO BY CHRIS CASSIDY



Carlos Baldomir, El Cajon, California

PHOTO BY JOEL ZWINK

Jose Luis Castillo, Las Vegas, Nevada

PHOTO BY RICK GUZMAN

Alexis Arguello, Carmen Basilio, Canastota, New York

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

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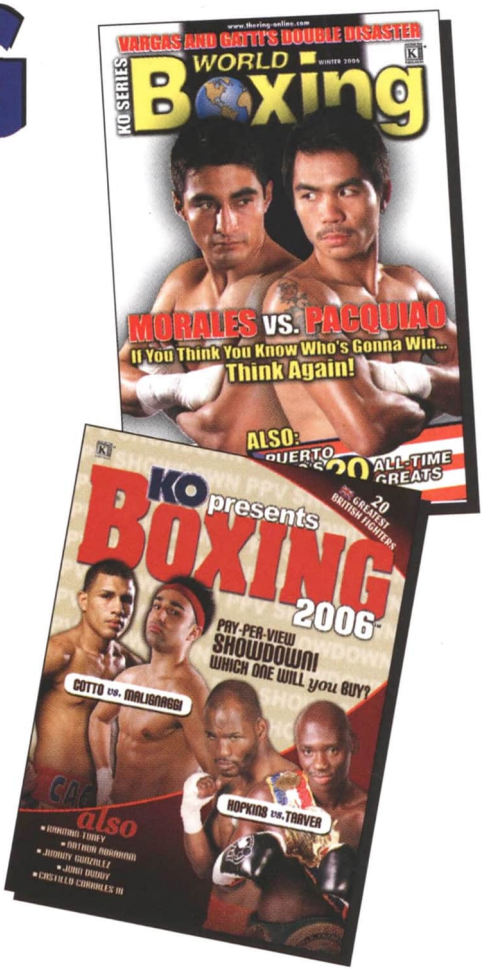
A DEVASTATING TWO-PUNCH COMBO!



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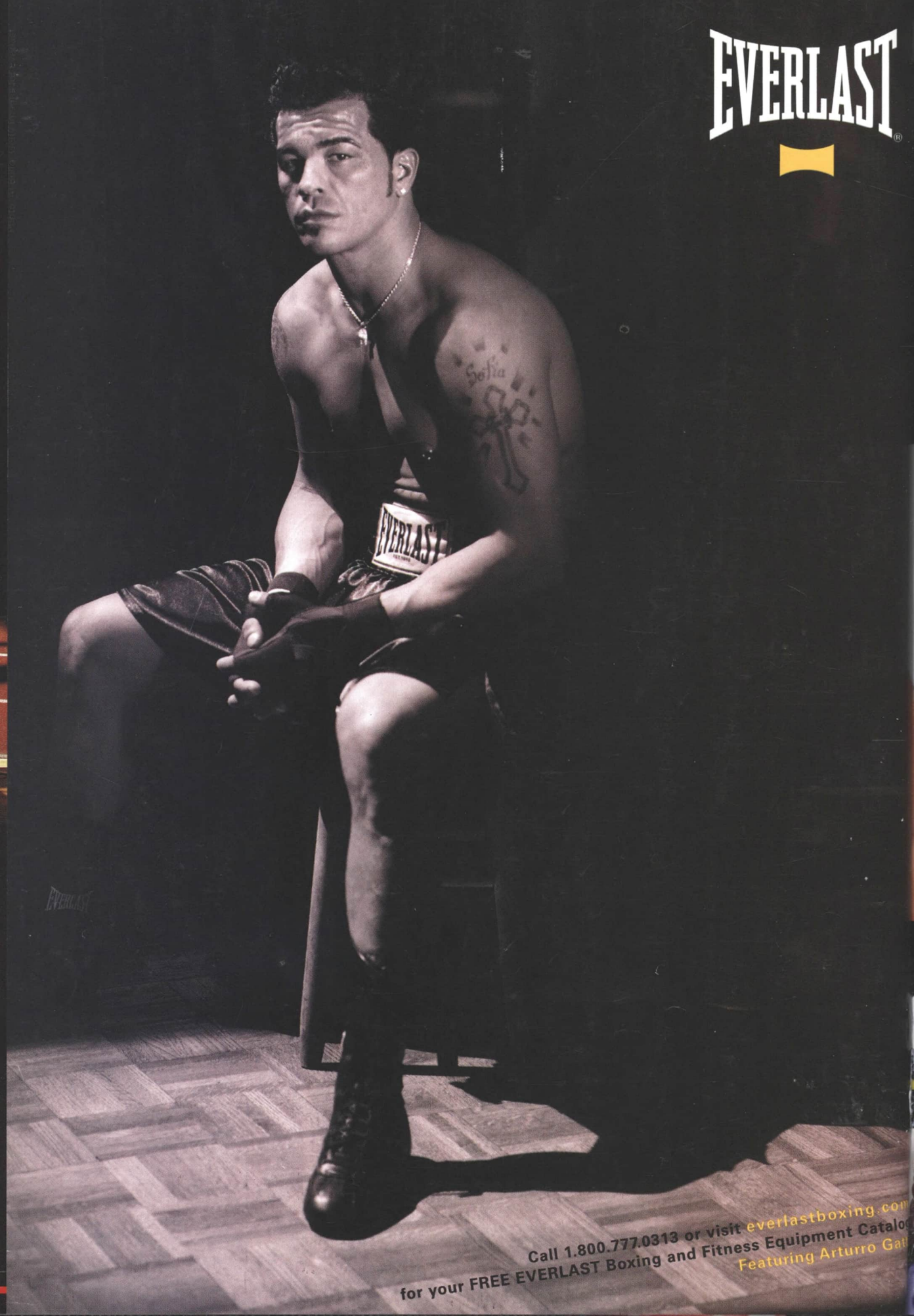
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